This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Miss Cooper.
July 19 15.

AT THE DAWN OF A NEW REIGN

KING STORK AND KING LOG

AT THE DAWN OF A NEW REIGN

A STUDY OF MODERN RUSSIA

BY

S. STEPNIAK

AUTHOR OF

'UNDERGROUND RUSSIA,' 'THE CAREER OF A NIHILIST,' ETC.

THIRD IMPRESSION

LONDON

CHATTO & WINDUS

1905

CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	vii
I.	—A TAME DESPOT	1
II.	—THE TZAR MUJIK	16
III.	—HESITATING ON THE CROSSWAY—THE LIBERAL PERIOD	28
IV.	—A TORY DEMOCRATIC PROGRAMME. .	45
V.	—THE UPSHOT OF AUTOCRATIC DEMOCRATISM—COUNT DMITRY TOLSTOI .	55
VI.	—A MAN WITH A SYSTEM	68
VII.	—THE GREAT FAMINE, AND THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE RUSSIAN PEASANTS	92
VIII.	—THE JEWISH QUESTION IN RUSSIA . .	112
IX.	—THE POLES AND THE FINNS . . .	153
X.	—THE STUNDISTS	165
XI.	—ADMINISTRATIVE EXILE AND IMPRISONMENT	184
XII.	—THE EXILE TO THE ARCTIC ZONE . .	200
XIII.	—SIBERIAN HORRORS—THE YAKUTSK MASSACRES AND THE KARA TRAGEDY .	221
XIV.	—NIHILISM	273
XV.	—MODERN OPPOSITION	281
XVI.	—THE NEW REIGN	296

INTRODUCTION.

A CERTAIN interest in Russia is one of the permanent elements of English intellectual life, being the result of permanent causes which do not depend upon the fluctuating tide of public curiosity. Two great rival States cannot possibly ignore each other. This interest naturally grows with the daily increase of the mass of people actually and intelligently participating in the political life of their country. Yet it is far from being due to political considerations only. If with every few years England becomes more truly democratic, she also becomes less insular. People take a greater interest in the politics, literature, social evolution of the great continental nations; foreign art obtains a footing in England; foreign ideas are assimilated and adapted to English life more quickly. England does not keep herself so entirely to herself as she did only a generation ago. She imports foreign intellectual goods to a vast extent; whilst formerly she was used only to export her own.

One important circumstance has given Russia a much greater share of that broad attention and study than the present state of her culture would warrant. It is the growing sympathy with the Russian people; the spreading of the consciousness that the Russian Government and the Russian nation are two things widely apart, and that whatever be the attitude of the English toward the former, they have no reason to feel anything but pure human sympathy for the Russian people. The Society of Friends of Russian Freedom, founded by Dr. Spence Watson, is a body which represents most thoroughly and consistently that newly awakened generous public sentiment. During the five years of its existence, it has rendered sterling services to both countries in creating better feelings and better understanding between the two nations, and its influence will surely extend much beyond the present time. It is paving the way for better mutual relations between the two countries in the future, when the Russian people will be masters of their own destinies. But in every movement consistent and thorough-going bodies form only a small minority in the mass of people who are more or less affected by certain ideas or tendencies.

I need hardly say that the number of people in both England and America who feel a genuine interest in the Russian people is far superior to that of the enthusiastic nucleus of men and women who are devoting their energies to winning over foreign public opinion to the cause of Russian Freedom. This is proved to demonstration by the existence of a whole literature upon all sides of Russian life, which could not be supported except by a large body of readers. It has been created by a vast demand, and it has had a corresponding result in vastly increasing the amount of knowledge of our country. But Russia is as yet too much behind Europe in her politics and culture to make the study of her life, history, and institutions a necessary part of a general education, as is the case with France, Germany or Italy. With the bulk of the educated English people the interest in Russia does not go beyond the desire to understand certain questions in connection with Russian life.

The Jewish persecution begins, driving out of their native land a million of men, who come to crowd the English labour market. The English naturally want to know what is at the bottom of these mediæval barbarities. The

persecution of the Stundists draws their attention to the religious conditions of the Russian people. The outbreak of a great famine, due to a comparatively insignificant failure of crops, puts before them the puzzle of Russian economic problems.

Some complication arises in the far or in the near East—in Japan or in Armenia—and it turns out that Russian diplomacy reaps where it did not sow, spoiling friends and foes with equal impartiality. People become curious to know why it is that Russia, which is so weak within, should be so strong without. A fresh move of the revolutionists revives the popular curiosity about the so-called "Nihilists," who are always the centre of attraction for lovers of the sensational as well as for earnest students.

And when the late Tzar died, all these questions and many more came up together, crowding upon one from all sides more quickly than one could answer them. Is the new reign likely to bring any change for Russia? Will the young Tzar start liberal reforms? Are such reforms possible? Is Russia ripe for political freedom? Has the Tzar the power to grant a constitution if he had a mind to?

These are, as far as I could gather, the chief points which the English wish to have explained.

The book which I have the honour of presenting to the indulgence of English readers is an attempt to give a reply to all these general as well as special questions, which come to public notice every now and then. I have put in chapters on the Jews, on Nihilism, on the Famine, on the Siberian exile system, some of which have been published at different times, and remoulded for the present book, others being new. But my chief aim was to answer one general question, which is still present to the public mind: how the recent change of rulers is likely to affect the destinies of Russia?

The time which elapsed since the idea of the book first occurred to me brought in many facts bearing upon this question.

The present reign is meant to be an exact facsimile of the past. This is an absurdity. History does not admit of such reiteration. The new reign has begun differently; it has found a different country, and it will develop differently. With a ruler like Nicholas II., changes are more likely to take place than with

any other; because they may come not only from below, but from above as well; from the fierce conflict and rivalry of the various factions which are struggling for ascendency and power. Under this rule autocracy is a house divided against itself. The reader knows how that must end.

Yet, in view of such aspirations, the study of the reign of Alexander III. is of more than historic interest. I have done my best to point out what an ugly skeleton was hidden under its Tory-democratic glamour, in order to show in what direction the blind power of reaction is trying to push our country.

In the concluding chapter I have tried to indicate the forces which are at work undermining the edifice of autocracy, and also the present attitude of the opposition.

S. STEPNIAK.

LONDON, *Nov.*, 1895.

AT THE DAWN OF A NEW REIGN

I.

A TAME DESPOT.

THERE is one curious anomaly about the fate of the late Russian Tzar. Men of some distinction, especially men in positions of power, are usually misunderstood and misrepresented in their lifetime, their death marking the line after which the truth is first told about them. With Alexander III. it was the very reverse.

As long as he was alive most thinking people understood him quite correctly, and those among them who were not compelled to silence spoke of him truthfully. But immediately after his death a deluge of nonsense about him has come pouring upon the innocent, or rather, perfectly indifferent public from the daily press. And it was not the usual tribute of forgiving tolerance paid to the solemnity of death. In looking over the papers for the day following the telegram from Livadia announcing that Russia had changed rulers, we find that the long acquired notions about Alexander III. found their expression in most of the English papers, regardless of their political colours.

"He was not a great statesman, wrote the

Times, "and, unlike many autocrats, he had the sense to know it. He made no pretensions to originality. He had nothing of the versatility, the brilliancy, or the evanescent enthusiasm of the 'broad Slavonic nature.' But, if his views were few and narrow, they were clear and strongly held. Peace was the unspeakable blessing which it lay in his hands to bestow on millions of his fellow-creatures. . . . Whether his policy towards his own subjects was as beneficent as his policy in foreign affairs, we need not for the moment inquire.

Through the veil of what may be called obituary euphemism, one can see clearly what the writer wants to convey.

Taking a paper of the opposite party, the *Daily Chronicle*, we find in it on the same date a notice which is more explicit as regards internal politics, but which is almost identical as regards the personality of Alexander III.

The leading Radical paper does not scruple to call his reign a tyranny comparable to that of the Tudors, and likely to lead to a violent revolution. Of him personally nothing higher can be said than that he would have made a highly respectable farmer or cattle drover, but was quite out of place upon the throne of a great nation, and that the unfortunate accident of his birth was a source of endless misery for himself, as well as for the Russian people.

A few days passed, and suddenly the *Daily Chronicle* became "lyrical" in its praises of the model Tzar Alexander III., the other papers vying with each other in extolling the greatness and the wisdom (not to speak of the virtue) of

a man of whom they had had such a poor opinion a short time before.

Why such a sudden change? Has anything been revealed throwing new light upon the late Tzar? No. It was the prospect of an Anglo-Russian *entente* which created that flood of benevolence.

The mood has passed away as quietly as the lame political scheme which gave birth to it. We need hardly speak of it except as an historical curiosity. Yet, as time goes on, the reign of Alexander III. acquires a peculiar interest for us. Since the young Tzar has declared his resolution to follow in his father's footsteps, the picture of our recent past becomes an image of our possible future. It is, therefore, a good time to tell the full, unadorned truth about a ruler who for thirteen years attracted such an unusual amount of attention.

. . . . . .

I do not feel in the least tempted to depreciate Alexander III. as a man. The English, who jealously keep their nominal rulers from any interference in politics, like to indulge in a sort of sickening monarchical cant in regard to Russia. They assume everything depends upon the personal qualities of the Tzar. When once they have come to the conclusion that the Tzar is not altogether a villain, their conscience is at rest; everything must be as good as it could be, and only fools and fanatics could rebel.

We Russians feel upon this matter very differently. Imagine an instrument of torture, a rack, a wheel, or a Nuremberg doll, and imagine somebody coming to the friends and

relatives of the victims, or to the victims themselves who have escaped with their lives, and calling on them to admire the good workmanship of that infamous machine, and the excellent qualities of the wood and the iron, which have been used for its construction. I do not think they would be able to show much appreciation of these unmistakably good qualities. The same may be said about the good points in the character of the man who is the main prop of the huge instrument of torture called the Russian autocracy. I do not want to deny these good points. I am willing to recognize them just to show how supremely and absolutely irrelevant they are for us.

I do not know whether the reader will endorse this standpoint. In any case, this attitude will serve him as a guarantee of my perfect fairness.

I leave to Mr. Stead and Co. the task of extolling the domestic virtues of Alexander III., and will speak of him only as a ruler.

The future historian of our times will look with a mingled feeling of pity and amazement at the figure of this relentless despot who, without any personal craving for distinction, made himself a wretched prisoner for life, in order to maintain a show of power which he did not enjoy and could not use.

Alexander III. was a man of routine—one of those who must walk in a beaten track. He clung to autocracy with an obstinacy worthy a better cause. But had he inherited a constitutional crown, he would never have transgressed the rights of his Parliament. He had not the masterfulness of his grandfather, Nicholas I., a

typical despot, and, unlike his father, he had a great respect for the laws passed by himself. His reign was the most lawless we have had since, perhaps, the time of the adventurers of the eighteenth century, because Russia was given over to a horde of lawless, irresponsible officials. But this was the natural consequence of the system. He himself did not take away what he had once granted. He tried to live up to the absurd fiction of the autocracy which he learned by rote from his manual of State law, as a form of government different from despotism in so far that the autocrat, being the absolute master of everybody, is bound by himself to obey the laws made by himself until it pleases him to alter them.

I heard from a trustworthy source the amusing story of the prohibition of the intended performance, at the Court theatre, of Count Tolstoi's "Dominion of Darkness." On this occasion, the Tzar showed the same helpless submissiveness to the whims of the censorship as the most defenceless of his subjects. He has read Tolstoi's play, and he liked it very much. His daugher Xenia Alexandrovna, who is the wit and literary critic of the family, liked it still more, and she proposed that the play should be performed privately in one of the halls of the Anitchkov Palace. Actors were engaged, and the rehearsals were begun, when the news reached Feosktistov, the head of the Press Department and of the censorship generally, who had a strong dislike for the play, on the ground of its "immorality,"

and prohibited its performance on the stage. But not wishing the prestige of his authority to suffer, he went to see Count Dmitry Tolstoi, then Minister of the Interior, who was of the same mind as regards the play. They saw the director of the Imperial Theatre, Potekhin, who had a direct authority over the actors engaged for the Court performance of the "Dominion of Darkness," and the upshot of it was that the rehearsals were stopped and the announcement of the performance withdrawn, although the affair was started with the Tzar's knowledge and consent. When Xenia Alexandrovna mentioned the matter at a family party, at which some Ministers were present, expressing her surprise, the Tzar turned to his Ministers, and merely exclaimed, with a meek astonishment one does not associate with the idea of an all-powerful despot: "Predstavte, Zapretili!" which may be translated, "Yes, imagine, the play has been prohibited!"

The affair did not go further and the play was not performed until many years later, when the censorship relented towards it.

One of the best biographers of Alexander III., Samson von Himmelstierna, says that the intellectual standard of the body of ministers was very low during the reign of Alexander III., because he always wanted to have around him men inferior to himself intellectually, entertaining a morbid dread of falling under somebody's influence.

That Alexander III. very much resented any appearance of outward influence is quite

true, and as time went on this feeling grew upon him. But it was the result of his growing diffidence and suspicion rather than of a domineering spirit. Retiring as he was, and painfully conscious of his own limitations, he was instinctively afraid of clever people, whom he did not know and could not completely trust. But it does not seem that he tried to shun the few clever people who for good or for ill, succeeded in gaining his full confidence.

The late Count Dmitry Tolstoi was undoubtedly a clever man in his way, whatever else he may have been, and so is Pobedonoszev. Yet Alexander III. stuck to both of them to the last, abiding by their advice and allowing them sometimes to rebuke him.

In 1882, one of the "student disturbances," rather common in Russia, took place in the University of St. Petersburg. The well-known Jewish magnate, Poliakov, one of the railway kings and army contractors, who during the Balkan war of 1877 made himself famous through all Russia by wonderful feats of swindling, resolved to ingratiate himself with the Russian public and with Count Loris Melikov. He gave, in 1880, twenty thousand pounds for the foundation of a "Students' Home," i.e. for building and fitting up a house where the undergraduate might obtain board and lodging at reduced prices.

The gift was not quite disinterested, and proved to be a good investment because it procured for him a Government contract worth several millions, which, unpopular as he was, he could not have obtained otherwise. How-

ever that may be, the students as a body were not at all pleased with such a gift from a man whom all Russia held responsible for such crimes against Russian soldiers in time of war. But when in 1882 the new students' home was opened, the university officials got up, without consulting the students, an address to Poliakov, thanking him for his munificence, in the name of the whole university. Having obtained a number of signatures, they sent the address to Poliakov through a small deputation which assumed the part of representatives of the whole body of students.

This provoked a storm. The students convened an indignation meeting to protest against the abuse of their names. The authorities interfered, for meetings of the undergraduates are prohibited. The whole "meeting"—four hundred people—was arrested, and half of them —two hundred people—were not released for three weeks. But public opinion and a considerable number of the university authorities were on the side of the students. The rector, Beketov, succeeded in interesting a very influential man, Admiral Reuter, in the fate of the young people. Reuter, then president of the council of ministers, promised to lay the matter before the Tzar, and personally to intercede in favour of the arrested students. He kept his word. At his next interview with the Tzar he introduced the topic of the day, which was the disturbance at the university, and warmly pleaded the cause of the students. He spoke of the generosity of youth, which could not swallow such a slight on the honour of their corporation as to have

thrust upon them the bounty of such a man, and a Jew. "If I were a student, I would have protested myself," he concluded boldly.

The Tzar was strongly impressed, especially by the appeal to his anti-Jewish feelings, and said,—

"Yes; I would have protested if I were a student."

The affair seemed settled. But here Pobedonoszev, who was also present, jumped up and began to speak most vehemently about the pernicious effect of the "Imperial Liberalism," which had already done the greatest possible harm to the country, in undermining the very foundations of law and order. He was alluding to Alexander II.

The Tzar did not say a word, and looked as sheepish as a schoolboy who is being scolded by his tutor—as one of the witnesses of the scene said to a friend of his. Reuter thought it impossible to press the matter any further, and the "ringleaders" of the disturbance were punished in the usual way; forty young men were expelled from the university for ever and exiled to the provinces; forty others were expelled for one year. The Tzar, at Pobedonoszev's instance, gave an audience to Poliakov, and vented his temper against him by putting the rather poignant question, how many millions he had made by his generosity.

Alexander III. was not always forbearing with his ministers. When his temper was roused he would abuse them and swear at them in the coarsest manner. In the autumn of 1886, it was rumoured in St. Petersburg, on good

authority, I believe, that he had once given the Minister of War, General Vanovsky, a sound box on the ear with his own rather heavy imperial fist. The quarrel with Prince Alexander of Battenberg was at its fiercest, and the Tzar ordered the prince's name to be struck out of the lists of the Russian army, in which he stood as an honorary commander of some battalion of guards. It was an unprecedented act of gross incivility, not to use a stronger term. Officers are struck off the army list as members are excluded from clubs only when they have done something positively dishonourable. Alexander III. fully deserved the retaliation on the part of the prince. The latter struck him too out of the list of his own small army, where he was the honorary commander of a regiment. The intended insult was thus converted into an amusing joke, and the ridicule was naturally turned against the aggressor. The German, *Kladeradatch*, embodied it in a caricature representing the two Alexanders in their night shirts, the Tzar shouting: "I have undressed you," and the prince shouting in return—"No, it was I who undressed you."

It was all Vanovsky's fault; had he informed his master that he was the honorary commander of a Bulgarian regiment before striking out the name of Prince Alexander, he would have withdrawn his own as an additional sign of his displeasure.

The position of the ministers of Alexander III. was not a dignified one, exposed as they were to similar treatment. But men who can stand it are certainly not worthy of a better one.

Otherwise they had no complaint to make against their master. Their appointment was a mere farce. Deprived as Alexander III. was of the principal gift of a ruler (as well as of too many accessory ones)—that of divining characters, he was absolutely at the mercy of court intrigues and favouritism. But he was not guided by personal likes and dislikes, as his two predecessors almost invariably were. He had an insuperable aversion to Vyshnegradsky; he profoundly despised as a man, Val, the head of the St. Petersburg police, and he cordially hated a minister, whom I will not name, suspecting in him Liberal tendencies. But he stood by them all when once appointed. At the beginning of his reign he summoned his former teacher, Professor Bunge, to the post of minister of finances. The professor declined at first, saying that he was not used to the court and had no faction to back him against court intrigues. The Tzar stretched out his hand to him and said: "I will be your faction." And he kept his word for six years, dismissing Bunge only in 1887, because the state of finances demanded imperatively a sharp trickster like Vyshnegradsky.

He rarely changed his ministers, most of whom had a longer tenure of office than in many constitutional countries. He tried personally to revise as much of the overwhelming mass of State affairs as was physically possible for one man, but he was not meddlesome, and allowed his ministers a good deal of latitude in their respective departments.

Thus, to sum up; his character, tastes, and

habits of mind fitted him for the position of a constitutional monarch. Certainly one does not see in him any instinctive predisposition to despotism. He undoubtedly was devoted to his country. He was killing himself with the drudgery of State affairs.

Yet no man, living or dead, has done Russia so much harm as Alexander III.; no one has inflicted upon her such deep yawning wounds, from which she can hardly recover for years. He inaugurated a reign of suspicion and terror, making the life of the whole educated class a humiliation. He demoralized it by imposing upon it a degrading hypocrisy, from which there was no outlet but in dreary apathy or cynical epicurism. And what makes the riddle still more puzzling for outsiders is that in order to do this he made his own existence more wretched than that of his humblest subjects. His was a life of incessant terror without respite by day or by night. Never for a moment could he feel safe in the streets, or in the midst of his army, or in the seclusion of his palace.

Death hovered over him. When he was travelling, some innocent creature was almost invariably killed for inadvertently approaching the line when the Tzar's train was expected.

In 1883, on the Tzar's journey to Moscow for the ceremony of the coronation, a peasant was killed under his very eyes, because he was swimming on a raft down the river, and could not stop when the Imperial train was crossing the bridge, Another time, in Gatchina, taking his walk in the garden of the palace, which was his prison, the Tzar asked a question of one of the

gardeners, who was digging a flower-bed some way off. The gardener threw his spade on the sod and hastened to the Tzar, but before he could approach him he was shot dead by the sentinel, who from the post of observation on the wall could not hear the Tzar's voice, but only saw a man approaching him hurriedly, and suspected a plot.

A much grimmer story is circulated about Baron Reutern, a relative of the minister of that name, who it is asserted was shot by the Tzar himself in a moment of suspicious terror. The young man was smoking a cigarette, and when the Tzar unexpectedly entered the guard-room, he hastily put it behind his back. The Tzar, haunted as he was by fear and suspicion, at once concluded that he was about to throw a bomb at him, and shot him dead.

Fear did not leave him even at the doors of churches.

A friend of mine who happened to see him at the Thanksgiving Mass in the Kazan Cathedral, in 1888, told me the following incident. After the service was over a crowd of students, especially selected for this purpose by Delianov, the Minister of Public Education, moved toward the Tzar, and surrounded him in a body, making all sorts of demonstrations of servile reverence, some of them trying to kiss his hands. But the hero of this demonstration stood pale as death, and for some time could not say a word. His first thought was that it was a body of conspirators who surrounded him, and that his last moment had come. It took him some time to realize his mistake. When at last he recovered,

he began in a broken, tremulous, utterly unkingly voice to thank the students, saying that he would not forget it. In fact, Delianov, no less successful than Count Dmitry Tolstoi, in stifling the youth of Russia, though his dismissal was expected daily, was confirmed in his post, and received in 1889 the title of count.

After the Borki catastrophe, the Tzar's nerves gave way completely, and his life during the last years of his reign, as shown by recent revelations, must have been something almost unendurable. In fact the constant nervous tension went a long way towards ruining his herculean constitution and towards hastening his end.

He could never get over the nervous shock the wrecking of the train at Borki gave him. Every insignificant accident, an unusual noise in the night, the appearance of a stranger, upset him, calling forth all his terrors. Yet he clung to the wretchedness of power, whilst with one word he might have made himself as safe as any king or queen in Europe.

How could such a thing be? Is autocracy such an absolute necessity for Russia that no matter how badly it works out, no European form of government can be thought of? And if freedom is a possible remedy, why was he so reluctant to try administering a small dose of it?

It is a not uncommon opinion that it was the terrible death of his father which forced Alexander III. into the line of stolid, unflinching reaction. Was not it so in reality?

To the above questions and a number of others connected with them, the answer will be found later on. I will begin with the last ques-

tion which comes first in historical order, and can be dismissed very briefly.

No, the tragedy of March 13th, 1881, did not determine Alexander III.'s internal policy, which was fixed in his mind long before his accession to the throne. On the contrary the fierce outburst of discontent, which culminated in the murder of Alexander II., seemed to have thrown Alexander III. off his balance and for some time a change of policy seemed possible. But that hesitation passed with the suppression of the movement which created it. The old ideas and the old influences took the upper hand, and the internal policy of Alexander III. took its definite shape, which it would have assumed at once, had the revolutionary outburst never taken place. It was then and only then that the Government was able to avail itself of its victory and point to the past as an excuse for the tyranny of the present. Every war is a game of chance, and those who do not win have to lose. The events of 1879-83 have served as a lesson which will not be lost upon the Russian opposition. They have proved that extreme parties and extreme methods alone cannot overthrow a government. The part of the Nihilists was that which artillery plays in modern battles. They shook the enemy's ranks, they sowed consternation in its midst and paved the way for a general attack. If it did not follow and the enemy was allowed to rally and strengthen its position once again, the blame is to be laid upon those who did not take advantage of the chance offered to them, and not upon those who created that chance. But let us return to Alexander III.

II.

THE TZAR MUJIK.

UPON the late Tzar, as heir to the throne, we have a very interesting and exhaustive study from the pen of Turghenev himself, who knew him personally, as did many of his intimate friends, from whom he got very accurate information as to his views and plans. With such materials, and his wonderful insight into the character of men, he was able, not only to draw his portrait, but to trace out the whole of his future policy. The surprising correctness of Turghenev's forecasts as to the acts of Alexander III., vouches for the correctness of the whole picture. This character sketch appeared anonymously in Madame Adam's "Revue Politique et Litteraire," soon after the accession of Alexander III. to the throne. Turghenev admitted freely to his friends the authorship of this article, but his name was not mentioned in connection with its publication, and it was not incorporated in his works.

Although very complimentary, the portrait has its lights and shadows, and represents the figure of a simple mortal, whilst a Russian is allowed to portray the Tzar only in the old symbolical Egyptian style—i.e. as the ancient artists of the old Nile painted their Pharaohs:

huge figures, all lights, covering the whole field of the picture, without the slightest regard to perspective or reality.

The most interesting part of Turghenev's study, which, as far as I know, has been overlooked by all the numerous biographers of Alexander III., is that which refers to his political programme. Turghenev says that this programme of intended reforms was cherished in his mind for many years, so that his informant was able to give him all its chief items. These are:—

1. Considerable reduction of the land redemption money, paid by the peasants to the State, which acted as intermediary between them and their former masters.

2. A radical change in the system of taxation which pressed too heavily upon the peasantry.

3. Abolition of the capitation tax, which peasants alone (and petty artisans and burghers of the towns) had to pay.

4. Measures for facilitating the migration of peasants from the provinces, where land became scanty to those where it was plentiful and free.

5. Reform of the passport system with a view of giving the peasants greater facilities in moving from place to place in search of employment.

6. The foundation of rural banks, which would relieve the peasants from the scourge of petty usurers, swarming in the rural districts, and eating up, like locusts, the substance of the peasantry.

Most of these reforms have been more or less

realized, in a queer way sometimes, as we shall presently see. But this was due to pressure of outward circumstances, and not to the will of the Tzar. All were discussed at his private council. There is no doubt, therefore, that they were in his mind when Turghenev wrote about him. And these were the only points of his politics upon which he has made up his mind. Everything else, according to Turghenev, was vague, and to be determined by circumstances.

Thus we have a full programme of reforms for the exclusive benefit of the peasants.

In discussing the future foreign policy of Alexander III., Turghenev foretells that it will be that of non-interference, rather of aloofness, because he says the Tzar is really indifferent to all that is not Russian. "He is, above all things, a Russian, and nothing but a Russian, his whole heart being given to Russia alone."

It is not exactly so. To Russia, as a whole, i.e. as a nation embodying a certain culture of its own, having certain aspirations and common characteristics, moral and intellectual, he was as indifferent as to Germany or to France. He loved only the peasants, who represented for him the whole of Russia. He wanted to be the Tzar of the peasants, says Turghenev. The name of Tzar Mujik, which was given to him later on, and which he himself liked to use, is not to be found in Turghenev's article, but the idea is there.

Alexander III. was a mujik on the throne, a title which is certainly a compliment in our Democratic age. But it is an unmixed com-

pliment only, if we are prepared to admit that a mujik taken from the plough would make a good minister of the interior, or of public education; or that the democracy of England would benefit by a law prescribing that all Members of Parliament should be elected from the class of agricultural labourers. Alexander III. was a mujik by his political creed, as well as by his sympathies.

All heirs are naturally prone to take to the opposition. As Alexander II. turned reactionary in the second half of his reign, his son became a liberal. But his liberalism did not outlive his boyhood. Turghenev tells us that it was the Parisian Commune of 1871 which cured him of this aberration. "That is what these things lead to," he would repeat on hearing of the excesses committed in Paris.

Confounding the exceedingly modest claims of the Russian Liberals with such acts as the burning of public buildings and the massacre of hostages, was rather ludicrous. But the fact that he gave up his liberal dreams so readily, shows that they suited him as little as wings would suit an elephant. He was born a Conservative, and he returned to his natural element like a fish to the water, becoming the friend and adherent of the Slavophils, who are the philosophers of what may be called nationalist Conservatism.

The Slavophils have been so much talked about in the English press during the reign of Alexander III., and they came so much to the front at its beginning, that it is worth our while to stop for a moment to explain the real

character of this party, which is quite unique of its kind.

The English know it in connection with foreign affairs, as a party representing the grasping tendencies of the Russian autocracy, chiefly among the Slavonic populations of Turkey and Austria, and having for its object the unification of all Slavonic races in one huge State, under the sceptre of the Tzar. Thus the *Panslavists* are confounded with the *Slavophils*, whilst the two parties are fundamentally distinct. The original Slavophils did not care for invading the West, their chief object being to purge Russia herself of the Western element which has invaded her. Their doctrine can be described as nationalism run mad. The Russian people, the Russian institutions, the orthodox church, and all that was genuinely Russian seemed to them so much superior to everything they saw among the Western nations, that, according to them, any borrowing or adaptation of Western ideas by Russians, could but spoil their ideal perfection. Thus they stood in opposition to the Government, which Peter the Great had transformed into a bureaucracy on the German pattern.

It is very interesting that this school of Chinese exclusiveness and self-sufficiency was founded by very gifted men of the highest European culture of the epoch, such as Homiakov, Samarin, the brothers Kireievsky, and the brothers Aksakov, Konstantin, who was the actual leader of the party in its palmy days, and the famous Ivan, who gradually came to terms with the Government.

All these men had at their finger's end the philosophy of Hegel, which was the gospel of their time, and may be described as followers of Fichte, whose ideas of the Messiah-like mission of the German people they were fully justified in twisting to suit their own ends.

If Fichte was right in asserting that the German race, being free from the influence of the Greco-Roman culture, was destined to build up a new civilization superior to that of the Latin race, the Russians clearly had the same advantage in a much higher degree. It was only from the time of Peter the Great that Russia had been spoiled by any culture at all, and at the epoch when the Slavophils began to preach, the disease, thank heaven, had not advanced far. As to the masses of the Russian people, the millions of peasants, they were as yet perfectly untouched by it. Russia's chances were not yet lost if only she would adopt the programme of the Slavophils, which was very simple: to turn for guidance in ethics, religion, and family life to the peasants, who had preserved in their primitive purity all the high, truly national ideals of life. In politics, they advocated return to the forms anterior to the destructive work of Peter the Great, i.e. to the Muscovite period of Russian history, which the Slavophils idealized beyond all reason, with that perfect disregard of documentary evidence characteristic of fanatics.

Of the first half of this programme I will not speak, because it is outside the immediate object of my book. Count Tolstoi is the last incar-

nation of this side of the old slavophilism, and I can refer the reader to his latter-day pamphlets, and stories, which explain what is meant by that seeking for moral truth in the hearts of the lowly.

But the political programme of the Slavophils deserves a closer examination, for it bears in many ways upon the question of modern Russian history.

The Muscovite monarchy was a gloomy, semi-theocratic, semi-patriarchal despotism, on the high-road to becoming a sort of petrified bureaucracy. Fierce, implacable persecution of the slightest independence of thought in religion, politics, philosophy, or even manners, was one of its chief characteristics. But the Slavophils overlook that as an accident, representing the Muscovite times as a sort of patriarchal idyll of a perfect harmony and mutual confidence between the rulers and the ruled. And we will not grudge them this little travesty of history, because we owe to it all that was good in the political programme of the Slavophils. Whilst vehemently defending the autocratic form of government as a national glory, the Slavophils declared themselves against the censorship and all restriction upon liberty of speech, which they considered as a manifestation of diffidence and suspicion alien to the spirit of a truly paternal government.

We have a very interesting document from the pen of Konstantin Aksakoff, the founder of Slavophilism, which presents an excellent summing up of the political philosophy and practical demands of the Slavophils. It is Aksakoff's " memorandum " which was presented through

Count Bludov to Alexander II. soon after his accession to the throne in 1855.

The memorandum is divided into three parts. In the first, the exordium, Konstantin Aksakoff explains the reason why he found it necessary to present his memorandum just then.

"Sire! Thou hast ascended the throne. These first instants are precious and of import, not for thee only, but for thy subjects also. Invested on a sudden with the dignity of sovereignty, thou hast not yet grown used to being Tzar. Thy spiritual hearing has all its freshness and delicacy, thy spiritual vision all its keenness and far-sightedness; both hearing and vision are more highly strained in these first moments of sovereign rule than at any other time. We trust that thou wilt ever strain all the forces of thy spirit to learn the truth for thy people's weal. But every period has a significance and glory peculiarly its own; and this is that of these first instants of Imperial power, the freshness and delicacy of which can never come again."

Then follows the exposition of the general views of the Slavophils, which are summed up in the third part in fifteen paragraphs, which I will give here, omitting some repetitions.

"I. The Russian people, containing no political elements within itself, has divested itself of supreme power, and has no desire to govern.

"II. Having no desire for rule, the Russian people assigns to the Government unlimited power.

"III. In return for this, the Russian people reserves to itself moral liberty, liberty of life and of conscience.

"IV. Unlimited power without the participation of the people can but take the form of absolute monarchy.

"V. The Russian state organization rests on the basis of the following principles: for the Government (necessarily monarchical in form), absolute governing political power; for the people, complete moral liberty—liberty of life and conscience, of thought and of word. The sole thing which the people, destitute of power, can and ought of their own initiative to offer to the all-powerful Government is *opinion* (consequently a purely moral force), and this the Government is free to accept or to refuse.

"VI. These essential principles may be violated either on the one side or on the other.

"VII. Through the violation of these principles on the part of the people, through the limitation of the power of the Government, and so through the participation of the people in governing, the people resorts to external coercive force, abandons its true path of inward spiritual freedom and force, and inevitably deteriorates morally.

"VIII. Through the violation of these principles on the part of the Government, through the restriction by Government of the moral freedom—the freedom of life and of conscience of the people,—absolute monarchy passes into despotism, into an immoral government, stifling all the moral energies, and corrupting the spirit of the people.

"IX. The principles of the state have not been violated (in Russia) on the part of the people, inasmuch as they are its fundamental national

principles; but they have been violated on the part of the Government—that is, the Government has interfered with the moral liberty of the people, restricted the liberty of life and of conscience (of thought and of word), and in so doing, has passed into a degrading despotism, stifling the spiritual existence and human dignity of the people, and involving ultimately the decay of the moral energies of Russia, and the corruption of society. This despotism threatens in the future either the total decline and fall of Russia, to the rejoicing of her foes, or the obliteration of Russian principles in the people itself, which, deprived of moral liberty, will be taught at last to desire political liberty, to resort to revolution, and to abandon its true path. Both of these issues are alike fraught with horror, inasmuch as both alike lead to destruction—the former one to material and moral destruction, the latter to moral destruction only.

"X. And thus the violation by the Government of the principles of Russian national life, the spoliation from the people of its moral freedom, —that is the source of evil of all kinds in Russia.

"XI. The improvement of things rests obviously with the Government.

"XII. The Government have laid an oppressive yoke on the moral life of Russia; it is bound to remove that yoke. The Government has deviated from the essential principles of Russian nationalism; it is bound to return to these principles. They are:—

"*For the Government, unlimited Governing power; for the people, complete moral liberty—liberty of life and conscience. For the Government,*

freedom of action, and so of legislation; for the people, freedom of opinion, and so of speech.

. . . . . .

"XV. Not content with the mere existence of freedom of speech, and consequently of public opinion, the Government at times feels the need of calling forth this public opinion. In what way can the Government call it forth?

"Ancient Russia illustrates for us both the thing itself and the means of obtaining it. Our Tzars used to call forth, on weighty occasions, the public opinion of all Russia, and for this end, to invoke *zemsky sobor*, or *national assemblies*, to which were sent delegates from all classes and all parts of Russia. Such a *zemsky sobor* was merely to obtain an expression of *opinion*, which the sovereign may accept or refuse.

. . . . . .

"And so what is wanted is complete freedom of speech, oral, written, and printed, always and at all times; and a *zemsky sobor* on those occasions when the Government desires to gauge the public opinion of the country.

"The inner social bonds of life have grown so weak in Russia, classes have become so antagonistic to one another, in consequence of the despotic system of the Government during the last 150 years, that a *zemsky sobor* at the present moment could not be productive of its full utility. I say, *of its full value*, for even immediately, the *zemsky sobor* would be of indubitable value both for the Government and the people, and it is but needful for some time to elapse for the Government to be able to profit by the wise

precedent of ancient Russia, calling in a *zemsky sobor*.

"Public opinion unreservedly declared—that is what might take the place of a *zemsky sobor* for the Government at the present moment; but for this end freedom of speech is indispensable, whereby the Government will be enabled to call a *zemsky sobor* without loss of time, to the unmixed benefit of itself and the people."

III.

HESITATING ON THE CROSSWAY—THE LIBERAL PERIOD.

IN 1881, by permission of Count Loris Melikov, Ivan Aksakov published his brother's memorandum in his paper, "Russia," evidently for the edification of Alexander II., whom the Count wanted to tranquillize as to the possible danger of encroachments on the side of the partisans of the Zemsky Sobor. But before the publication of the long article was completed, the tragedy of March 13th took place, and thus the posthumous work of the prophet of Slavophilism came to be a solemn appeal to Ivan Aksakov's imperial pupil. Although a much weaker man than his brother and rather a time-server, Ivan Aksakov was honest enough not to conceal his opinions, and we may assume that the doctrine which he tried to impress upon the mind of the future Tzar, Alexander III., was that which we find in the memorandum of Konstantin. But Turghenev says that Alexander III. endorsed only a part of it. The metaphysical division of the two functions in the State—the action and the thought—was too subtle for him, and he introduced into the Slavophil doctrine a modification which a Russian mujik might, and

a Russian Tzar was sure to think of: he dropped all which referred to the obligations of tolerance, recommended to, if not imposed upon, the Tzar by the idealism of the Slavophils. As a practical man, he took the kernel of their doctrine, which is the idea that autocracy is for Russia the best possible form of government, and any limitation of autocracy ought to be resisted by the Tzar on national, as well as on personal grounds. All the rest he rejected as impractical, as, indeed, it was. In this form the doctrine pleased him mightily. In an interesting letter to his brother, the Grand Duke Vladimir, accompanying the copy of the autocratic manifesto, which marks the turning-point of Alexander III.'s policy, the Tzar writes: "I will never allow any limitation of autocratic power, which I consider necessary and useful for Russia."

The Russian Tzars and the autocrats of all nationalities have always been prone to take a very exalted view of their importance to the world in general, and the countries blessed by having them as rulers in particular. This is only human. In our modest walks of life we are all inclined to look upon ourselves and our work in a magnifying glass. George Eliot says that it is very happily ordained so, for we should not perform even the little we do perform without that spur of self-idealization. But if it is a good thing, we have surely too much of it in men born in the regal purple, with whom this natural weakness of mankind has been inflated and developed to monstrous proportions by their artificial surroundings. There has hardly been

a Tzar or an Emperor who has not considered it his special mission to be a despot as completely and as long as he could. But when to the flatteries of courtiers the influence of some philosopher or religious fanatic has been added, then we see the formation of the deeply convinced, i.e. the worst possible despots of the type of Philip II. of Spain, or Nicholas I. of Russia, in whom the best and the worst elements of human nature combine to make them the scourge of their land.

What Joseph de Maistre was for Nicholas I., Ivan Aksakov was for Alexander III. He made him a fanatic of autocracy. When, in 1879 and 1880, the revolutionary movement assumed threatening proportions, he was in favour of merciless reprisals. He would have played the part of the Duc d'Alba had his father allowed him.

I have been told of a little incident which occurred in 1878, soon after the execution of Martin Kovalsky, a revolutionist who was accused of armed resistance in Odessa, tried by court-martial, and shot in August, 1878. General Heins, who was the chief of the police and garrison of the city, and had to superintend the execution, tendered his resignation, and went to St. Petersburg to present it in person. He was an honest man, and a true and devoted servant of the Tzar—such as there are few among the officials of our time. His object in coming to St. Petersburg was to seek an interview with the Tzar, and to render him the greatest service a subject can render to his sovereign by boldly telling him the truth upon the Russian situa-

tion. He did not succeed in obtaining an audience with the Tzar, but he was able to see the Tzarevitch, and to him he poured out his loyal and patriotic remarks upon the impossibility of suppressing by mere force a movement which had the strength of an idea behind it, and of the fatal consequences which the policy of reprisals might have for the State and the person of the Tzar.

"When the judges who pass the sentence of death, and the officer in command of the soldiers who are to carry it out, and the soldiers themselves are all pale as death, then it means that there is something wrong in the system which commands these executions."

The Tzarevitch listened, not saying a word, with a sullen expression upon his heavy face.

"Then you mean to say that the Tzar ought to make concessions to his enemies?" he said.

"Not to his enemies, but to the country, which has no quarrel with him," answered the General.

Upon this the Tzarevitch rose from his seat, put his hand—which, it is rumoured, could unbend a horse-shoe—upon Heins's shoulder, and squeezed it violently, pushing his visitor out of the room. That was all he got for his pains, except the blue marks of the Tzarevitch's fingers, which remained on his shoulder for several days.

He showed them to his brother, telling him that, on leaving the palace, he said to himself that there was no hope of concessions—at least till the third reign. General Heins is dead

now, so that one can tell the story without committing an indiscretion.

The words of General Heins proved prophetic in both ways—as regards the immediate, as well as the more distant future. The policy of reprisals of Alexander II. led to the fatal result which everybody knows; and Alexander III. as everybody knows, too, made no concessions whatever. Yet his policy was not fixed all at once. The terrible outburst of discontent, which led to the tragedy of March 13th, 1881, set even this man thinking and hesitating, little as he was given to thought or hesitation. The first year of his reign he was like a man standing at crossroads, vacillating and uncertain as to which way he would take.

The Princess Dolgoruki, who, after her morganatic marriage with Alexander II., received the title of Princess Yurievsky, took her revenge on the Nihilists who had deprived her of her husband and of her position at the Court. Under the pseudonym of "Laferte," she published a book, by which she set afloat the legend of the Nihilists having killed the Tzar on the eve of his granting to Russia political liberty.

If this were the fact, the blame would be at the door of Loris Melikov, who publicly stated, in an interview with the editors of the chief papers of the capital, that no limitation of autocratic power was in contemplation. But we know what to think of it now that authentic documents bearing upon the matter have seen the light.

When the late dictator died at Nice, an official of the Russian Embassy arrived from Paris and put seals on all his papers, which

were sent to St. Petersburg to be kept in the archives of the State, until the triumph of the Revolution. Foreseeing the fate awaiting his manuscripts, Count Loris, who was keenly solicitous about his reputation, allowed a friend of his to copy some of the most interesting of the documents and letters, with a view to their publication some time after his death. This manuscript was delivered, in 1893, into the hands of a small company, founded in London for the publication of books prohibited by the Russian censorship. As a member of that company I know how and through whom the manuscript reached our hands, and can vouch quite confidently for its authenticity. Now, from this document we learn: (1) that what Count Loris Melikov proposed to Alexander II. was not a constitution, but a plan of convocation of notables from the Zemstvos, whom the Government might consult upon points selected by it; and (2) that Alexander II. did not sign this project a few hours before his death, as was reported, to enhance the dramatic effect of the situation. He merely ordered the project to be brought before the Council of his ministers, for discussion at the next sitting, which was to take place on the 17th March.

Count Loris Melikov was a moderate Liberal, who dreamed of a monarchical constitution and of political freedom for Russia.

"Unfortunate country," he wrote later on to a friend, "will ever the happy day come when a Russian, like a citizen of any other country, will be allowed openly and freely to express his views, his convictions, his opinions upon men

and things without running the risk of being proclaimed a revolutionist and an enemy of law and order?" But he was not able to bring Alexander II. round to accept his views. The well-known leader of moderate Liberals, Koshelev, in his posthumous memoirs, relates that Count Loris Melikov told him confidentially that "he had lost all hopes of obtaining from the Emperor his consent to a summoning of the national assembly." His project was certainly utterly unlike the convocation of such an assembly. It is idle to speculate upon the fate of a project which had not been finally accepted by the changeful Alexander II., and which was kept in absolute secrecy on purpose to leave the Tzar full freedom of withdrawing it if the fancy took him.

Anyhow, Alexander III., shattered by the tragedy of March 13th, and by the general fermentation of men's minds, which infected even the highest circles, began by doing what his father had been about to do.

On the day of the catastrophe he ordered Loris Melikov's project to be made public. He withdrew this order a few hours later, but he confirmed Loris Melikov, who tendered his resignation, in his office, and he ordered his project to be read at the Council of Ministers convened for March 21st. The Grand Duke Vladimir, Count Valuev, Nabokov, Solsky, Milutin, Saburov, and Abaza pronounced themselves in favour of the project. Pobedonoszev, Count Stroganov, Makov, Prince Liven, and Possiet against it. Seven voices for, five against.

The Tzar expressed his agreement with the majority, and he seemed to have quite made up his mind and to be much relieved. Spending the second half of the day following the council with the Grand Duke Vladimir, he exclaimed, "Thank God, I feel as if a burden has been taken off my shoulders," as the Grand Duke told Loris Melikov later on.

The affair seemed finally settled. But it seems that autocrats can be firm only in reaction to which they naturally gravitate. When undertaking anything in the opposite direction, they are like bodies whose centre of gravity is over the point of support and whose unstable equilibrium can be destroyed by the slightest touch.

K. P. Pobedonoszev, who was holding the modest office of procurator of the Holy Synod, for the first time made his hand felt in the affairs of State. A mediæval bigot, whose figure is too familiar to all the reading world to need description, he stood at the Tzar's ear as the representative and spokesman of uncompromising reaction. Being, unfortunately we must say, a man of unimpeachable personal honesty and disinterested devotion to his crazy ideas, he succeeded in obtaining over the Tzar, his former pupil, such a strong and lasting influence as no other man ever had. But, with his great erudition, he was absolutely deficient in originality, and, beyond religious persecution, is not credited with having initiated any reactionary measures. He always played the secondary part, holding the candle to some more inventive man. It was Katkov in the beginning of the reign, and, later on, Count Dmitry Tolstoi.

Pobedonoszev was untiring in setting his pupil against the whole of the educated class, which he represented as conniving at and approving of the murder of his father. When it was proposed to start a subscription for the building of the chapel at the spot where Alexander II. was killed (which was never completed because the money was stolen by the managing committee under the presidency of Grand Duke Vladimir), Pobedonoszev wrote to the Tzar on March 16th:—

"Your Majesty, let the accursed educated class (intelliguenzia) of St. Petersburg, with all its insane trumpeters, howl around—here will be a spot where a Russian's heart will find holy peace." He frightened him with the fate of Louis XVI. of France, if he followed the lead of the Liberals. Katkov, in his paper, insinuated very clearly that treason was nestling in the Tzar's own family, and that the Grand Duke Constantin, the Tzar's uncle, was the actual leader of all the liberals and an abetter and ally of the terrorists, and was planning a Court revolution. And he used all the power of his brilliant sophistry to prove that the resignation of autocracy would be the end of Russian greatness and a betrayal of the trust of the millions of Russian people.

Katkov was a dishonest man, using his enormous influence for making his private fortune. This was proved on his death by the fact that he left over a million roubles which he could not possibly have made otherwise than by foul means. But he was the strongest man in the Reactionary party, and its actual creator

and inspirer. Pobedonoszev summoned him from Moscow in the middle of March and arranged two meetings with the Tzar, which lasted for several hours.

But the man who proved of still greater use as a tool of the reaction was Ivan Aksakov. He was very intimate with Alexander III. as Tzarevitch, who had a great respect and affection for him. Now Aksakov, with all his naïve dreams of liberty of the press and of speech, and his hostility to bureaucracy, was dead against the idea of a "constitution," as a thing borrowed from the "rotten" West. When driven into a corner, he confessed that he did not know himself how practically to realize his plans of preserving autocracy whilst abolishing the bureaucratic despotism and the tyranny of censorship. Yet he preached vehemently against the Liberals, who offered a practical solution of the problem. His own incapacity for doing so he hid in a cloud of high-flown empty phrases about the necessity of "putting oneself face to face with Russia," "bending the ear to the pulsation of her heart," and the dangers of "being unfaithful to one's own nature," promising that in some mysterious way Russia will evolve in the future a political arrangement, absolutely unlike anything we see in the West, and as perfect as it will be original. (See Aksakov's "Russia.")

Out of this silly rigmarole, Alexander III. could not make head or tail. But one thing was clear and precise: the advice not to yield to the "sedition" both revolutionary and liberal.

A perfect chaos reigned in the government

and in the head of the Tzar too. The fear of new attempts was the dominant feeling with all. The police having proved inefficient in defending the head of the State from the attacks of his enemies, it was decided to form for the protection of the Tzar a secret society of volunteers, organized avowedly on the same plan as the revolutionary Executive Committee. The Grand Duke Vladimir was at its head, and it was backed by the enormous wealth of Prince Demidov San Donato, besides many other wealthy aristocrats who joined the Society. Patronized by the Tzar's brother, the Holy League was quite above the reach of the ordinary police or the minister of the interior. It was a State within the State. It held its secret meetings like the Nihilists' Committee, and it is fully proved that in imitation of the Nihilists, it passed sentence of death upon some of the most prominent Nihilists, which, however, were never carried out for lack of courage in the Executive. Though it did nothing particular in any other direction, it spread nevertheless with such rapidity as to alarm the Tzar whom they meant to protect. With adherents among the high officials of the army and the civil service and with its enormous wealth the Society might easily have become one day a danger to the State, especially as it was in the hands of the ambitious Grand Duke Vladimir, who was considered something of a rival to the Tzar.

But the Government was so completely disorganized that it could not venture to hurt his own adherents by denying them the right of

putting themselves outside and above the laws. To protect the Tzar against his protectors, no better expedient was devised by his intimate friends than to found another society more prudent, but secret nevertheless. It was called the Voluntary Defence, and, being patronized by the Tzar himself, it spread very rapidly, absorbing most varied elements. Its avowed object was to protect the Tzar's coronation, not trusting in the capacity of the police to achieve that end. With this object the Society approached the Revolutionists living abroad, offering them a price for a promise to allow the Tzar to put on his head the crown of his forefathers. It made overtures to the terrorists who were kept in prison as hostages.

At the same time the Society entered into a formal agreement with the Raskolriks—a body of Ritualist Dissenters numbering many millions and very well organized—to obtain from them some thousands of trusted men who would serve as a sort of escort to the Tzar and represent the "people" during the coronation.

The Government, undermined by revolutionary and liberal agitation, was further discredited by the machinations of these two rival societies. The Tzar was a prisoner in his own palace, being inaccessible to anybody, even to his own ministers; the wire-pullers, like Pobedonoszev, and Katkov, either from cowardice or diplomacy, kept in the background, putting nonentities into the positions of power and responsibility.

It was at this moment that a bold plan

for a palace revolution was, it is said, formed by General Skobeleff, the hero of the Turkish war, and the idol of the Russian army. I have the story through a man to whom it was told by General Loris Melikov, during his last illness in Nice. I have no reason to disbelieve its truthfulness. General Skobeleff was a daring and powerful man. During his stay at Smolensk he had tried to approach the Revolutionary party. Besides, he had the courage openly to express his disapprobation of the policy of the Government by refusing to share with his colleagues the doubtful honour of the dictatorship over Russian provinces, which was instituted in 1879. He would not join, in 1881, the "Okhrana" or Voluntary Defence of Prince Veronzov Dashkov. He was certainly a man capable of conceiving a plan of a palace revolution. However, as my information on the subject is second-hand, I leave it to stand on its own merits. The story is that Skobeleff proposed to move to the palace at the head of one of his regiments, upon whose absolute devotion he could count, to arrest the Tzar Alexander III., to establish a provisory Government, and to proclaim a Constitution. He was ill-advised enough to confide his intention to Count Ignatiev, whose co-operation he considered necessary. The feather-headed Count did not want much persuasion. He consented enthusiastically, and the two allies went to see Count Loris Melikov, to whom Skobeleff told their joint project. Loris Melikov, on seeing Skobeleff's companion, refused to have anything to do with the intended revolution.

It is doubtful whether he would have accepted the proposal had Skobeleff been alone, or with a more trustworthy companion. Count Loris had nothing of the dash and fiery ambition of the hero of Shipka.

When the Bulgarians were on the look-out for a prince, he was approached on the subject of standing as a candidate. But he declined, although he had good chances of election. When a friend asked him why he had shown such inopportune modesty, and lost such a unique chance, he replied that it was not modesty, but prudence. "You know the Government was not favourable to my candidature, and might have deprived me of my pension."

A man who will resign a crown for fear of losing a pension, has not the stuff of which Cromwells are made. Anyhow, he refused point blank to be a party to the conspiracy, and the same evening, Ignatiev, to make the best of a bad job, denounced both his would-be colleagues in the provisory Government. A few days later Count Ignatiev was at the head of the ministry, and Loris Melikov was making himself ready for a trip abroad, which was a sort of informal exile. The reactionary party had played him out very skilfully. Whilst the astute Count was wasting his time in trying to influence the Tzar, by every possible means, except the only one that would tell, the display of the force of the Liberal party, the reactionists prepared in secret a manifesto, which pledged the Tzar to the autocratic policy. We have a very interesting letter of Alexander III., which throws some light upon the machinations

of the reactionists, and also the simplicity of their master.

On April 27 (May 9th) the Tzar was writing to his brother:—

"I send you, dear Vladimir, the project of a manifesto approved by me. I want it to appear on the 29th of April (May 11th). I have been thinking of it a long while. The ministers are for ever promising to take measures that would render the manifesto unnecessary, but as I can never get any decisive step out of them, and the people's minds are still in a ferment, and many expect something extraordinary, I resolved to apply to K. P. Pobedonoszev, and asked him to draw up a manifesto to state clearly what direction I want to give to affairs, and that I will never consent to the limitation of autocratic power, which I think necessary and useful for Russia. The manifesto seems to me to be written very well. It was fully approved by Count Stroganov, who also agrees with me upon the timeliness of such a step. To-day I have read the manifesto personally to A. V. Adlerberg, who fully approved of it. Thus, with God's help, forward!"

We have rarely a chance of seeing the private correspondence of a Tzar who is our contemporary, and few documents convey a better idea of the darkness prevailing in our highest spheres.

The Tzar has no suspicion of the intrigue of which he was the object. He believes himself the initiator of the whole affair, and he is so innocent of all political notions as to apply to Pobedonoszev when he is dissatisfied with the

procrastinations of Loris Melikov. And this is done only a few days after he has inscribed, with his own Imperial hand, on the margins of Loris Melikov's project, the words, "It is very well written." This means, if it means anything, that Alexander III. repudiated at the end of April what he had approved in the middle of the same month, or that he did not understand at all what the project meant, and might lead to. He had inscribed the enigmatical "It is very well written," quite perfunctorily, simply to say something, as though he would thoughtfully remark that "the Count's handwriting is good." In both cases we can well endorse the old Oxenstiern saying that little wisdom rules the world.

Being much smarter than their opponents, the reactionaries took care not to let the cat out of the bag, out of fear that their enemies might oust them, as they had been ousted a short time ago. The preparation, and even the printing of the reactionary manifesto remained a secret to the seven ministers supporting Loris Melikov, and probably to many of the reactionary ones. When it appeared in the *Official Gazette* on April 29, it was like a thunderbolt from a clear sky.

"It is a treason, a reactionary *coup-d'état*," exclaimed Loris Melikov. He and two of his colleagues, Milutin and Abaza, tendered their resignation. The Tzar was surprised. He had not expected his manifesto to prove unpalatable to the Count and his friends, which might lead some disrespectful persons to the general conclusion that the Tzar was not very quick in

grasping the meaning of official documents. But the resignation of the Liberal ministers was accepted, though not very gracefully. Alexander III. could never forgive any of the three statesmen for such an unprecedented demonstration. In fact a resignation of a minister, not to speak of a resignation of three of them at once, on the ground of principle, was something unheard of in Russia. The Tzars are used to consider all public offices as a service to them personally. Loris Melikov and his colleagues were the first to introduce the question of their political views.

Thus the Liberal period of Alexander III.'s reign came to a close, and the "peasantist," of Slavophil period began.

IV.

A TORY DEMOCRATIC PROGRAMME.

COUNT IGNATIEV, the pet of the Slavonic committee, and of its president, Ivan Aksakov, was not a person agreeable to Pobedonoszev or Katkov. But they did not stand in the way of his nomination, biding their time. Some concession had to be made to the leader of the Slavophils, who had been so useful to them in detaching Alexander III. from Loris Melikov. Besides, too abrupt a turn of the rudder was dangerous upon a rough sea. Count Ignatiev was just the man to weary out the public agitation, and gain time without the slightest chance of ever doing anything serious, because nobody, except Mr. Stead, could take him seriously.

The Count gained his spurs in the East, as the Russian minister in Constantinople. It is said that he had a special gift of making friends with the Turks, then taking advantage of them, and then making friends again. Orientals do not mind deceit and treachery, if it is clothed in amiable, winning form.

But his appearance as leading minister is one of the strangest events of that strange time. With his many and varied gifts the Count combined a fancy so vivid and unruly as to entirely

deprive him of the capacity of distinguishing truth from fiction. No end of anecdotes are circulating about him in Russia.

It is said that being invited once to step into the carriage of Prince Beloselsky, who was going the same way, he forgot that carriage and team were not his own, and began to improvise a wonderful story about the merits and genealogy of the horses, which were presented to him, he assured the prince, by the Sultan himself.

"But excuse me, Count," said Prince Beloselsky, "you forget that the horses are mine."

"Oh!" exclaimed the Count, "I beg your pardon. But it makes no difference; they might have been mine."

For him, what has been and what might have been—reality and fancy—were the same.

He is a born actor, and he enters heart and soul into the part he fancies on the spur of the moment. The well-informed St. Petersburg correspondent of *Free Speech* tells us that when he was minister he amused himself and his clerks with the following farces:—

A petitioner would come from some distant town to inquire about some business of his own. The Count would receive him with the most winning courtesy.

With a tremulous voice the petitioner would ask about his affairs.

"Oh, things are going on capitally," the Count would reply, encouragingly. "Be seated, please."

"Mr. So-and-so," he would call one of the clerks, "what is the position of this gentleman's case? Is your report ready?"

"Yes, your Excellency," the clerk would reply without flinching, "it is ready, and will be included in your next report to the Emperor."

The petitioner withdraws in exultation; and when the door is shut behind him they all burst into a laughter. His case had not been even read.

This was not done out of malice, but from the desire to please. Count Ignatiev wants to please everybody, and he is remarkably versatile. He can be jocular or serious; he can assume the most varied parts, giving everyone what he supposes he would like best. With Ivan Aksakov and the Slavonic committee he is an ardent Slavophil. With the Tzar he was a hot monarchist with democratic leanings.

An old refugee, who had made himself a good social position in the south of France, told me that once Count Ignatiev, in a confidential talk, recommended with the greatest friendliness some improvements in the organization of the Nihilist party.

"An Executive Committee! It is a mere shadow!" he said. "They ought to have at their head one energetic man, well connected, with a good position in society and well known to the country, and with a Russian name."

The Tzar wanted to make his reign a golden era for the peasants, and he had some pricks of conscience for having very nearly put aside what was the last will of his father—the convocation of notables proposed by Loris Melikov.

The Russian public, like the sea after a storm, was still agitated by the waves of recent commotions. It wanted something to occupy its mind and feed its hopes.

Count Ignatiev tried to satisfy both the Tzar and the Russian public by starting what has been called—very improperly—a national domestic policy.

With much beating of drums and blowing of trumpets, the Government, through its papers, declared its resolution to carry out a series of important reforms for which the democratic party had been clamouring for ten years past. The Liberals, the Radicals, and the Revolutionists were urging, in fact the whole opposition was urging, that the misery of the masses of the peasantry was the supreme justification for the demand for reform on the part of one section and the rebellion on the part of the other. And all agreed in admitting that its chief cause lay in the exorbitant taxes on the one hand and the insufficiency of land allotted to the peasants on the other.

Now Count Ignatiev announced that the Tzar would use all his power to bring about a series of reforms in precisely that direction. These were: reduction of redemption money, which was the chief item in the payments of the peasants; obligatory settlement of the redemption, which many landlords had been putting off for twenty years; abolition of the capitation tax; facilities for peasants renting crown lands; facilities for migration from over-populated provinces to the outskirts, where land was plentiful; foundation of a peasants' bank to advance them money for facilitating the purchase of land from the nobility; finally, measures for the suppression of drunkenness, which was the source of ruin for so many peasant households.

Nothing worth speaking of was actually done, and the peasants were left by Alexander III. much worse off than he found them.

Nicholas II. had to acknowledge that in his manifesto, which begins by the statement that the condition of the masses of the peasantry is unsatisfactory. The story of the reign of Alexander III. and of the great famine of 1891-92 is there to prove that it is so. But the programme of reform was certainly a very brilliant one. It was sufficient not only to make the Tzar believe that his dream was being realized, but to turn the heads of a number of so-called Russian "peasantists," or short-sighted democrats who consider political freedom somewhat aristocratic or *bourgeois*, and think that economical reforms for the benefit of the peasants, even started by an autocratic Government, are much more valuable for the nation than general freedom. The official press was not wholly unsuccessful in advocating the theory that the educated or upper classes could put off their dreams of a constitution for a time and let the Government do something for the peasants first.

But the bulk of the Russian public could not be taken in by such a transparent snare. After twenty-five years' experience of the reign of Alexander II., most people knew very well how much autocratic reforms come to. Something had to be done to divert the general diffidence, and here Count Ignatiev's genius for political humbug showed itself in all its possibilities. He pretended that the Government meant to carry out the projected reforms, not in the usual

bureaucratic way, but on an entirely new plan; i.e. with the co-operation of the press and of the representatives of the nation. For a whole year the internal politics of Russia were like a scene out of a comic opera.

Afraid to confront any genuine representation of the people, the Government summoned to St. Petersburg a number of notables, "well-informed men," as they were called, or experts, who were appointed *ad hoc* by the governors of different provinces, who were to judge of their fitness unaided.

The assemblies of these notables had no right of initiative; no right to step out of the strict limits of the question which was submitted to them by the Government, and their resolutions could be taken into consideration by the Government or not, as it chose. This was in strict conformity with the plan proposed in Count Loris Melikov's project, but it was a poor substitute for the national representation which the Opposition demanded, and the Russian public made no mistake possible on this point.

Count Ignatiev's view upon the co-operation of the press was, to say the least, a curious one. He upheld the opinion that union is strength, and mercilessly crushed all the papers which refused to sing his praises. At no time was the Liberal press persecuted so relentlessly. In the years 1881 and 1882 thirteen periodical publications (daily papers and magazines) were suppressed, and twenty-eight periodicals suffered administrative penalties of various kinds. Some Liberal papers did not bring out one-half of their number in the year.

The official and semi-official press clamoured only the louder, being left almost in exclusive possession of the right of speech. It went into ecstasies over the projected reforms, the comedy of the commission of experts, and the silly masquerade of the reintroduction of ancient Russian dress and customs. The Tzar let his beard grow—a thing which had never been seen since Peter the Great shaved himself—and compelled his reluctant boyars to do the same. A uniform resembling the peasants' costume was proposed for the army, and at Court balls the ladies appeared in the dresses of the Muscovite period.

All this was hailed by Aksakov as a return to the good old times, when Russia was proud of her nationality, and did not ape the heretical West.

Of course, all men of any sense laughed at these mummeries.

The Liberal Party showed in this trying time greater energy than at any other period. The Zemstvos besieged the Government with remonstrances. That of Novgorod passed a resolution prohibiting their members from taking part in the commission of experts, unless they should be appointed to this office by the Zemstvos. Twelve other Zemstvos made statements to the same effect, expressing the hope that the members of these commissions would be elected by the Zemstvos, and not nominated by the Government. The Zemstvos of Novgorod, Tver, Kirilov, Tchernigov, and Kharkov asked in plain terms for the participation of representatives of the nation in legislation.

The Government silenced the voices of these

true patriots. The governors of the provinces received stringent orders not to allow the Zemstvos to discuss any such questions. Some of the members of the Zemstvos were visited with administrative punishment.

Thus a whole year passed, and the popular excitement subsided, tired out by its own intensity. The Liberals did not succeed in spreading it farther and deeper. They had not the courage to override the order of the Minister, and to compel the Government either to yield, or to persecute them in the same relentless fashion as it persecuted the Nihilists; and the Nihilists could not fill the double function of conspirators, and leaders and organizers of the public.

The want of union and mutual understanding between the two branches of our opposition told grievously in this most decisive moment of our political life. The forces which in other revolutions, have worked together, mutually assisting and completing each other, with us have been divided. The reckless audacity, the enthusiasm, which measures neither danger nor sacrifice, was on one side; whilst it was utterly without the social influence and representative character of the other section.

Neither could succeed alone. The terrorist method became impossible with the accession to the throne of a new Tzar, who had not shown his hand, and the extreme party showed much political sense and self-control in entirely abstaining from them under very severe provocation. Attempts were made to organize a

military insurrection—we shall record them later on; here we will merely say that they did not ripen into actual outbreak, and the revolutionary agitation in the country subsided, so that the Government considered its position as safe once again.

Count Ignatiev had played out his part; he was no longer necessary. For one moment he thought of regaining the ground he had lost by raising the outcry against the Jews, which would secure him the good-will of the Tzar and Pobedonoszev, and rally around him the jingoistic elements of Russian society. But the time was not yet ripe for that; and Count Ignatiev, by his greed and double-dealing in this matter, only hastened his ruin.

It is rumoured that, at the last moment, seeing the ground sinking under his feet, he surprised everyone by an unexpected change of front, and advised the Tzar to summon a Zemsky Sobor, or national assembly. The proposal was rather out of date. Yet, apprehending some unexpected move on the part of his master, Pobedonoszev went to see Count Dmitry Tolstoi, who expressed himself in these remarkable words: "Why disturb the usual course of affairs by the convocation of a National Assembly, when the opinion of the country can be obtained in a much simpler way? Write a circular letter to the governors of all the provinces, asking them to report upon the public feeling in their respective provinces. You can read their replies, and you will know the opinion of the country."

This extraordinary view of representative institutions appeared a stroke of genius to Pobe-

donoszev, who reported it immediately to the Tzar, who was profoundly impressed by the wisdom of the advice. A few days after, Russia learned through the Official Gazette that her destinies had been entrusted to the most unpopular and inapt of Russian statesmen.

V.

THE UPSHOT OF AUTOCRATIC DEMOCRATISM—COUNT DMITRY TOLSTOI.

COUNT DMITRY TOLSTOI began his career as Minister in the office to which Pobedonoszev has since given so wide a renown: the office that is, of procurator of the Holy Synod, or chief administrator of the Church, corresponding to the French *Ministre des Cultes*. This does not in the least imply that he had any turn for theology, or that he was of a specially devout character. Unlike his renowned successor, Pobedonoszev, Count Dmitry Tolstoi's bent of mind was decidedly secular. He, never troubled himself about religion, except from the police standpoint; and his knowledge of the Scriptures was so vague that on one occasion, in full Synod, after quoting, "No man is a prophet in his own country," he added, "as a French proverb has it." He had got it himself from a French proverb, and did not suspect that there was anything more behind it. For the Russian clergy, whom he ruled, he had the contempt of a Russian grand seigneur, accustomed to regard them as an inferior caste, dependent on the

bounty of the manor house, and only one degree superior to the menials. His ten years of office as the head of the Church administration, to whom the seamy side of the life of the clergy was inevitably revealed, did not tend to increase his respect for the representatives of the national Church. His after-dinner pastime was to amuse his guests by telling anecdotes of the gross misconduct of bishops, who, being monks in the orthodox church, are credited with all the sins which popular suspicion attributes to monastic orders.

But in one respect Count Dmitry Tolstoi was utterly unlike the grand seigneurs of our country, and, in fact, the whole of our upper classes. That was in his attitude to the peasants, and in general to those plain sons of Adam, who have all undoubtedly long pedigrees, but do not remember them. The broad and generous democratic spirit of which Count Leo Tolstoi, the distant relative of the Minister, is such a splendid exponent, may be considered a common characteristic of our upper classes, without distinction of parties. Sometimes a deep and powerful stimulant of action, sometimes not going beyond a superficial benevolence, this feeling is always sincere and spontaneous, being the organic outcome of the whole of our history, as well as of our social condition. But there are exceptions to every rule, and Count Dmitry Tolstoi, through all his long career, has shown such a steady aversion and contempt for the masses of our people, that he, the descendant of a house of noblemen of three hundred years' standing, might be taken for one of those

foreign adventurers, who never fail to attribute their success to their own merit alone, and pay their debt of gratitude in haughty contempt for the nation to whom they owe their elevation. Yet the "liberal" Alexander II., and his "peasantist" successor kept this man in office between them for twenty-one years—from 1866 till his death in 1889, during which period he was in disfavour only for twenty-four months. Alexander II. was not, however, entirely in sympathy with him. He made use of him as a bloodhound to track out and root up the seeds of sedition in the high schools, which, in 1866, culminated in Karakosov's attempt.

The appointment of Count Dmitry Tolstoi to the post of Minister of public education was a punishment inflicted upon Russia for the participation of a certain number of students of the Universities of St. Petersburg and Moscow in the conspiracy which resulted in that unsuccessful pistol-shot of April 4, 1866.

If the whole of the ink-stained youth of Russia had been privy to the offence, their punishment could hardly have been more severe. It lasted fully twenty years, and might fairly be described as spiritual penal servitude.

Count Tolstoi went to the root of the evil. The turbulent Universities received their contingent from the colleges—gymnasiums. He resolved to apply the screw to the tender brains of boys just out of the nursery. With the assistance of the pedagogues of the *Moscow Gazette*, Count Tolstoi elaborated a programme which was a masterpiece of stultifying sterility and difficulty. The

boys' brains were stretched on it as on a rack, and very few could stand the strain without breaking down. Statistics have shown that out of about sixty thousand pupils entering the gymasiums during the seven years' course, only six-and-a-half thousand, or one-ninth, completed their studies, obtaining a diploma, which opened to them the doors of the universities. The remainder broke down in the race, and were turned adrift without any chance of utilizing the years they had wasted in insipid drudgery. And no scope for private initiative in education, no high school except those of the Government existed. No possibility for parents to screen their children from the effects of a system, which was a veritable massacre of the innocents. Russia was like Rachel crying over her children. But the Tzar remained deaf to the voice of expostulations: Count Tolstoi had promised him to purge the schools from the revolutionary infection, if he were allowed to have his way.

The outbreak of rebellion in its fiercest form at the end of the seventies, after Tolstois system had fourteen years of trial, showed that he and his remedy were a fraud. Count Loris' Melikov succeeded in obtaining from Alexander II. the dismissal of the noted "minister of public benightedness," as he was appropriately called, and there was universal jubilation all over the country, as at a deliverance from a foreign invasion. Parents ordered thanksgiving services to be sung in churches. The press was full of such eulogies of the Tzar, and such frank and outspoken abuse of the retiring minister, that the censorship department took alarm. The

exultation of the present was a grievous aspersion upon the past. But public feeling was too strong to brook restraint. The Government could not for one moment doubt that none of its representatives was so cordially and universally hated as Count Dmitry Tolstoi. He seemed dead and buried.

In Russia, a minister who has been dismissed is hardly ever called back; this would mean an implicit recognition of the previous error, and an autocratic ruler will think twice before forfeiting his claims to infallibility.

But Alexander III. disregarded this tacit rule, which his autocratic fanaticism should, one would have thought, have made more stringent for him than for any other Tzar. Two years after his dismissal, Count Dmitry Tolstoi was summoned to a still higher post than he had filled before: that of the Minister of the Interior.

How, of all men, could Tolstoi deserve to be made an exception? Why should the "peasantist," Alexander III., of all Tzars, make an exception of such a man?

On being summoned to the Gatchino palace he said to the Tzar, Alexander III., "I am at your Majesty's service, but I am not aware if my views have the honour of meeting with your Majesty's approval. I do not," he explained, "understand the peasantry of Russia at all. To my mind the strength of Russia lies in the cultured classes," by which he meant the nobles.

Now, as the Tzar professed to understand the peasants only, and certainly did not understand the cultured classes, one would have thought

that the two men should have parted company at once. They could not help making "a mess of it," in ruling the country on two opposite plans.

They did, in fact, make a mess of it, but they never parted company until death severed their connection, because there was one essential point which they both understood excellently: autocracy.

Alexander III. understood it as a fiction in the style of the Slavophils. Count Dmitry Tolstoi understood and accepted autocracy, such as it is, has always been, and will remain as long as it exists, i.e. as a bureaucratic despotism, which he wished to strengthen by making it aristocratic.

Pobedonoszev was right in telling the Tzar that with such a minister autocracy was safe from any underhand attacks, and, for Alexander III., this was the essential point. Thus they got on together, the Tzar sacrificing his democratic aspirations for the sake of the maintenance of his power, the Count humouring his master by throwing to the humble peasants some crumbs from the table of their betters.

Alexander III. had a few ideas which he held firmly. The strongest was that of the necessity and usefulness of his power to Russia. How far his policy was a compromise with the exigencies of life, and how far a treason to the masses of the Russian people whom he professed to love, the balance of the good and of the evil which he has actually done to them, will show.

From the time that Count Dmitry Tolstoi came into power, the domestic policy of Alex-

ander III. was irrevocably fixed, so that the history of his reign becomes identical with that of Count Dmitry Tolstoi's administration. The continuity was not interrupted by the bodily disappearance of the powerful minister.

Before starting on his vast experiment, Count Dmitry Tolstoi gave himself a little recreation in hunting down the press. The farewell concert of execration it gave him in 1880, was, as we have said, something unique in its kind, and not easily to be forgotten by a man of forgiving temper. And Count Dmitry Tolstoi was viciously vindictive, in which again he is marked off as a deviation from the Russian type.

As the Tzar did not understand the press, and his confidential advisers understood it too well, there was no one to stand between the irritated Count and his prey. In no time the Liberal press was annihilated. The largest papers, such as the *Golos* and *Poriadok* disappeared, and the famous magazine the "Annals of the Country," was suppressed. The minor periodicals followed suit.

The ground being cleared, the indefatigable champion of reaction set himself to work in earnest. He began methodically and deliberately, as one who feels his hands free, and knows that he can bide his time. The task he had planned for himself required time and deliberation, for it was nothing less than upsetting the very foundations of our democratic country, transforming it into an aristocratic one. The plan was certainly more destructive and "visionary" than the boldest schemes of the Nihilists. In fact, the Nihilists wanted to change the

Government, so as to adapt it to the requirements of the democratic country; whilst Count Dmitry Tolstoi wanted to upset the democratic structure of the country in order to suit it to the needs of the Government.

What made the efforts of Count Dmitry Tolstoi quite hopeless, and even a little ludicrous, is the fact that the nobility, on whose behalf he was exerting himself, by no means shared the ambitious dreams he cherished for it. The bulk of the nobility does not care to play any political part: they are too indolent, too fond of the lighter pleasures of life to nourish class ambitions. It is rare for them to have the energy and public spirit to take any share or active interest in public life at all. And the public-spirited minority is antagonistic to these schemes of class dominion, which wound its democratic sentiments, and are opposed to its historical traditions.

There is no creating aristocratic tendencies where there is no room for aristocracy. The Russian nobility has been a class of privileged servants of the State: trained warriors to whom, instead of salary, the State gave certain portions of land, transferring, at the same time, certain rights over the peasants who were occupying it at the time. Originally the peasants, as free men, had the right of moving from one place to another, changing their landlords as freely as a modern English farmer. As time went on, the State expanding, and the difficulties of national defence increasing, the right of peasants to leave the land of the nobles was gradually restricted, until it was abolished altogether.

Serfdom was nothing but the gradual restriction of this right of free movement, and the fixing of tenure of State lands, first upon the nobles individually, then upon their descendants as well. This double reform was introduced gradually in the course of a century and a half, entirely in the interests of national defence. The nobles had to serve the country in the army or civil service from early youth till the age of sixty-five. As a compensation, the State imposed upon the peasants the obligation of giving them their unpaid labour. With the liberation of the nobility from obligatory service to the State by Peter III., serfdom lost its *raison d'être* and became a monstrous injustice. It was maintained, however, by Catherine II. and her successors, as a means for securing the adhesion of the nobility, which thus became a privileged class in the worst sense of the word. But the privilege treacherously bestowed by the Tzar proved to be a poisonous gift to the nobility.

From a hard-working, energetic, and useful class in the community, the nobility was transformed into a body of idle drones, enervated and demoralized by the absolute power put into their hands, and the easy, slovenly life they were enabled to live; and certainly the nobility have not gained in political influence what they have lost in personal qualities. There is no love lost between masters and slaves, and the Russian nobility never had any trace of the most essential attribute of aristocracy—moral influence over the masses of the people. The peasants obeyed their masters out of deference to the supreme power upholding them. But

there was no human tie between them. The resident nobles were perfect strangers to their peasants, by whom they were generally hated, in some exceptional cases loved, but never respected. Up to the present the word, "barin," or "a noble," means, in the peasant language, a fellow who is unfit for any serious work or business of life, whatever else he may be.

After the emancipation—for which the best part of the nobility had been agitating for two generations—the democratic principles forming the basis of our social life were allowed free scope, and the nobility, as a class, never showed any attempt to put obstacles in their way. The most numerous and poorer section of the class, the lower or smaller nobility—which the Government had purposely excluded from participation in local self-government—being the best educated class of the community, is the most democratic. But even the richer section of the nobility, which alone is admitted to representation in the Zemstvos, is remarkably free from the domineering spirit characterizing nobilities of feudal origin. The nobility protested repeatedly against the attempt to constitute it into a dominant class. Whilst, in his coronation speech to the peasants, Alexander III. made himself the mouthpiece of Count Dmitry Tolstoi's aberrations—advising the peasants to obey the local Marshals of Nobility—we find in the addresses of the authoritative spokesmen of the nobility an emphatic repudiation of all desire to rule over the other classes of the community.

The feelings which the nobility expressed

on these exceptional occasions were confirmed in practice during thirty years of provincial self-government. Although numerically in the ascendant, out of the thirty-eight provincial and about two hundred district Zemstvos, one can point to only a few cases where these assemblies tried to further any class interests. When, in 1871, the question was put to them as to the reform of taxation, they were unanimous in advising a graduated income-tax. But the paternal Government would never adopt their advice in that matter, well aware that only the peasants would pay, asking no question; but the middle and upper classes, after paying their money, would ask to have a voice in their expenditure.

The abolition of the tax upon salt, which bears so heavily upon the peasants, and hardly affects the upper classes, was due mainly to the efforts of the Zemstvos. And when, in 1893, the Government, being short of cash, wanted to reintroduce it, the Zemstvos and the upper classes in general prevented this backsliding in the interests of the masses.

With a class imbued with such plebeian sympathies Count Tolstoi's aristocratic dreams could not find favour. So much so, that when Count Dmitry Tolstoi, being, in 1881, out of office, offered himself as a candidate for the Zemstvo of his province (Riazan), the nobility blackballed the ardent champion of their rights.

Of course such opposition on the part of the best elements, we may safely say, of the bulk of the nobility, would have disheartened any man of ordinary common sense. If forcing people

into something repugnant is difficult, forcing them into accepting a favour is simply absurd. But Count Dmitry Tolstoi was a man with a system, and he would not allow any such trifling consideration to stand in his way. If he could not reckon upon the support of the best part of the nobility, he was prepared to make use of the worst, provided the system should triumph. As a man with a system he proceeded systematically.

The Russian nobility was ruined by the emancipation, owing to its utter inability to adapt itself to the new conditions of life. Before elevating this class to the high functions which Count Tolstoi conceived for it, he resolved to re-establish its former economical predominance. The idea was a very good, even a brilliant one, and quite in keeping with modern scientific theories.

Our age has been so deeply impressed by the economic philosophy of which Karl Marx is the founder, that even men who hold his name in abhorrence, and certainly have never read any of his works, will sometimes show an amusing deference to his views. Count Tolstoi was one of their number. He was advanced enough in modern social science to understand that unless he succeeded in improving the economic position of the nobility, all attempts to make it the leading class in politics would fail hopelessly. Had he advanced a little further in economics, he would have discovered that he was flogging a dead horse. Classes change their function on the historic stage so organically, that to bring to life one that has succumbed in the struggle

for existence, is as impossible as to repopulate the earth with antediluvian animals. But Count Dmitry Tolstoi was a statesman of the old stock, who believed that the State can do anything.

The nobility was losing ground, and rapidly dwindling away as a territorial power, owing to its impecuniosity. He therefore jumped to the conclusion that the State had only to lend them money ungrudgingly, and the process would be stopped, and the nobility would flourish once again.

The foundation of a special bank for this object in 1886, opened what has been called in Russia the era of the nobility.

VI.

A MAN WITH A SYSTEM.

THIS is the fitting place to mention that about two years before that time a peasants' bank had been opened. The object of the Peasants' Land Bank was to assist the peasants in acquiring on easy terms some land, of which they were in such great need. It was the outcome of the honeymoon of the Tzar's peasantism, its plan having been elaborated and accepted under the ministry of Count Ignatiev, who "understood the peasants." But its operation began under Count Tolstoi, who could not decently suppress it, and probably did not care to, for it was evident that this democratic mushroom would not stand in the way of its aristocratic rival. It is interesting to make a parallel study of both these financial concerns.

The Peasants' Land Bank was started on a very modest scale. The State Exchequer, which was so prodigal to its rival, the Nobility Land Bank, would not come to its assistance, unless we count as such the eventual credit of half-a-million roubles (about 50,000*l.*) Its resources depend upon the 5½ per cent. bonds issued by the Bank, with the State guarantee to the extent of five million roubles a year.

With such limited resources the Peasants' Land Bank could satisfy only a very small fraction of the very keen demand on the part of the landless peasantry.

Still, it did a good work, especially in the beginning, in assisting some of the peasants in purchasing the disposable land of other classes.

On the whole, the Peasants' Land Bank may be called the most successful of the measures representing the democratic tendencies of the Tzar Alexander III., though its success, as we shall presently see, was a very modest one.

In 1884, which was the first year of the regular activity of the Peasants' Land Bank, it had advanced nine and a half million roubles to peasants of various denominations, helping them in acquiring 210,000 deseatines. The full value of this land was a little over eleven millions. Thus the peasants had advanced one and a half millions of their own.

The operations of the next year were still more successful; the purchased area of land increased to 318,000 deseatines, its total value to sixteen and a half million roubles, out of which the Peasants' Land Bank advanced fourteen millions.

But the third year of the activity of the Bank shows a slight falling off from this absolute maximum: the area to 295,000 deseatines; the value to thirteen and a half millions, and the advance to eleven millions; and the farther we go the worse it grows.

The area of land which the Bank helped the peasants to purchase is decreasing gradually and regularly with every year that passes. The

falling off in the total value of the purchased land is also regularly decreasing, but more rapidly than its total area, whilst the advance of the Bank diminishes in a still more rapid proportion than the general operations. The Bank has become stingier in proportion as it restricts its activity.

In 1886, which followed the year of the greatest prosperity of the Peasants' Land Bank, the area of purchased land is 22,000 deseatines below the earlier figures, namely 295,000; then it sinks to 219,000, 190,000, 156,000, 172,000, 161,000, which is about *one-half* of the year 1885. The value of the purchase gradually sinks from sixteen-and-a-half millions to five and five and a half millions, or to *one-third* of the earlier sum; whilst the Bank, which in the beginning advanced fourteen million roubles, stops now at three and a half millions, or less than *one-fourth* of the earlier sum.

It is evident that the Peasants' Land Bank is not doing well, and that there is some organic defect in the mechanism. It is easy to find out what it is. The Bank has forgotten its original democratic aim. The political inspiration to which it owes its origin did not outlive three years; the Bank became rusty. During the first years it advanced money chiefly to the peasants who had very little land of their own—under one and a half deseat. per soul (taxable unit). Very often it advanced the full sum of the purchase-money to people who had no other guarantee to offer but their willingness to work.

The administration of the Bank in its earliest official reports, says, that such invest-

ments were among the safest, because in such cases the peasants had not to borrow from usurers, and at very high interest (thirty-five per cent. is the average, sometimes a hundred per cent. and more), the supplementary money, and thus were better able to fulfil their obligations toward the Bank, their sole creditor.

But there are peasants and peasants, and there is land and land. Such transactions required a certain amount of attention and carefulness to be uniformly successful, and the Peasants' Land Bank, entrusted as it was to the care of a lazy and apathetic bureaucracy, preferred very soon to drift into the usual routine of money-lenders, which secures the safety of an investment without the slightest trouble. It is not improbable that the ill-will of the leading ministers had its share of influence in hastening this natural result. Anyhow, in 1887 the Peasants' Land Bank was not the same as in 1884-5.

The regulations permitted the Bank to ask from the peasants, by way of security, that they should pay a fraction (up to 25 per cent.) of the purchase-money.

During the first three years of its activity these supplementary payments were about 12 per cent. on the average, as the Bank did not use its privilege beyond the limits strictly necessary. But then the supplementary sums reach 16 per cent., then 18 per cent., 21 per cent., and, in 1888, 25 per cent., at which figure they keep. But this not seeming sufficient, the Bank having been allowed by the regulation to put certain conditions to its mediation, the administration introduced, as a general practice,

that the Bank should make its assistance conditional on a lowering of the price of the purchaseable land.

This meant, of course, merely a supplementary payment by peasants to be got from the same source as the former, i.e. from usurers. The seller would not abate the price agreed upon simply to meet the wishes of the Bank.

Thus the Peasants' Land Bank was virtually advancing only about one-half of the purchase-money, at the comparatively moderate interest of 5½ per cent. (with different out-goings 6½ per cent.), leaving the peasants to find as best they could the other half. The Peasants' Land Bank became an ordinary loan office, which could only contribute to the economical disintegration of the village communities.

N. Kvalson, who since the death of Professor Yanson is the best authority on the economics of our rural classes, thus sums up his detailed study of the Peasants' Bank:—

"Judging from all the materials supplied by the official reports of the Bank, and from other sources, we can confidently affirm that the Peasants' Land Bank, in lowering the purchase prices, and in raising the supplementary payments, in the best cases supports those who might very well have managed by themselves, but usually works into the hands of rural usurers."

The Peasants' Land Bank, even at its best, was a small affair, though much big talk has been made out of it. With the seventy millions of rural population, increasing at the rate of 1 per cent. a year, no less than two millions of

deseatines ought to be added every year to the peasants' property out of unreclaimed land, merely to meet the demand of these new-comers. And there are, at least, twenty-five times as many more among the men of the generation which witnessed the emancipation who have been turned into landless proletarians.

Only an agrarian revolution—peaceful if possible, violent if not—will satisfy the just claims of the Russian peasants. As to the Peasants' Land Bank, in the ten years of its existence it assisted in the purchase of only 1¾ millions of deseatines, out of which not more than three-quarters of a million went into the hands of those who were destitute of land.

But if all the land had been turned to the same good use, it would not, in all the years of its activity, have filled the want which the mere increase of population creates in one year.

The Peasants' Land Bank does not deserve much notice on its own account, but its history is interesting as illustrating in a minute sphere the generic peculiarity of bureaucracy, which proved so fatal in all the greater reforms of Alexander II., and in all the measures which benevolent despotism has started in Russia within the last forty years.

If we pass to the story of the Nobility Land Bank, we shall find it quite as suggestive, though in an entirely different line. Its object, as its name indicates, was similar to that of the Peasants' Land Bank. But what a difference in the methods! No trace of suspiciousness or stinginess; not even common prudence in subsidizing a class which gives no guarantee what-

soever of its solvency. The owners are allowed to give their own estimates of their estates, which the administration almost invariably accepted, making but a slight reduction. All facilities having been offered for the borrowers, there was a rush of impecunious noblemen for loans from the new bank.

In the first year of its activity, 1886, the Bank gave away sixty-eight and a half millions of roubles, or seven millions more than the Peasants' Land Bank disbursed during the ten years of its existence. But next year, when the time for paying the interest came, almost the whole body of the borrowers proved defaulters.

The fact is unique, and it is difficult to find a more conclusive and damning proof of the utter hopelessness of the aristocratic dreams of Count Tolstoi and Co. But this egregious check produced no impression upon them. The next year a still larger sum—seventy-one millions of roubles—was swallowed up in the same insatiable abyss, which again returned nothing, and gaped for more. In 1888, after three years' operation, the total amount of arrears was ten and a half millions of roubles, out of twelve millions of roubles which had to be paid.

After an experience of this kind, the wisest thing to do would have been to close the Nobility Bank altogether, and to sell up the defaulting debtors. But a much milder course was adopted. The Bank waited for three years without receiving a penny from most of its creditors, and then the Government, by an ukase of October 12th, 1889, virtually cancelled ten and a half millions of arrears of interest, which

were added to the original debt, partly with a nominal interest, partly without any interest at all.

The nobility remained in possession of its land, which ought in justice to have become the property of the State, and the Nobility Land Bank remained to subsidize them. Up to January, 1892, the Bank advanced to the nobility the total sum of three hundred and forty millions, at the rate of about fifty millions of roubles a year. To show the grandmotherly nature of this institution, suffice it to mention that out of these fifty millions yearly subsidy full sixty or seventy per cent. is retained for the payment of ancient debts. Yet the Bank goes on subsidizing such insolvent clients over and over again.

The Russian nobility has shown its full worth, or rather, its full worthlessness as a political factor, by the use it has made of the assistance received. A class of luxurious paupers, kept at the expense of the tax-payers, cannot have political influence. Instead of raising the prestige of the nobility, Count Tolstoi only succeeded in lowering the prestige of the Tzar with the masses of peasants by showing his partiality for their former masters.

But whether from fanaticism or hypocrisy, Count Tolstoi remained absolutely impervious to the most palpable evidence of the absurdity of his political plans. He pretended that the Nobility Land Bank had improved the economic position of the nobility quite sufficiently to proceed to the restoration of its political influence. His project of the abolition of the

peasants' communal autonomy, and of their subjection to the authority of a special administration, composed of members of local nobility—this project of his, which he considered the crowning work of his life, was actively elaborated in the Ministry.

Meanwhile, another law, inspired by the same narrow-class prejudice, but easier in execution, was promulgated in 1887. Its purport was to exclude from the privilege of secondary and higher education all except the nobles, and the richer section of the middle-class. By a decree of the minister, the directors of *gymnasiums* (colleges), were enjoined to refuse the children of shopkeepers, artisans, and tradesmen admittance to the schools, even though their parents might be quite willing and able to pay their fees. It was an act of monstrous injustice and tyranny. By a stroke of his silly pen the minister deprived thousands of young Russians of their inalienable right to self-improvement and knowledge, and made distinctions which are unknown to the code of laws. But the stupidity of this decree is as surprising as its coarse arbitrariness.

The suppression of education altogether might be of great use to the autocracy—ignorance being the best safeguard of loyalty. The system has been tried on the lower classes, but it was impossible to extend it higher without giving up Russia's claims to be a first-rate European power. The State could not stand, and be administered and defended against external enemies, without a vast body of educated people to act as its officials. And once

admitting education at all, it was perfectly useless to restrict it to one class rather than to another. Parents cannot be a guarantee for their children, and the educated youth belonging by birth to the nobility, acquire higher interests, which they will not sell for a governmental subsidy. They cast in their lot with the people, swelling the ranks of the revolutionists, the majority of whom belong to this class, simply because, up to the present, it is the best educated in the community. If this advantage were increased artificially at the expense of other classes, this percentage would increase, and the Government would have gained nothing.

This educational restriction, unprecedented even in Russia, greatly exasperated the middle class, which had already become a power in the country, and to no purpose irritated the whole of the Russian public. The pressure of public opinion compelled the Government to put the absurd decree into abeyance. Still, Count Tolstoi probably congratulated himself on having put another stone to the foundation of his favourite scheme by investing the nobility with the double power of wealth—through the Nobility Land Bank, and knowledge—through the decree of 1887.

The times were ripe for striking the great blow and turning the tide of the democratic age, to convert Russia into an aristocratic country. The project of the new law was finished and revised by Count D. Tolstoi, but here his career ended. He died, accompanied to his grave, as the wicked magnate in Nekrasov's poem, "by

the secret curses of the country, and loud praises," in which the Tzar's voice rang the loudest.

It is rumoured that on his death-bed he obtained from the Tzar a solemn promise that his favourite "reform" should not be forgotten. In fact, it was carried out, notwithstanding the universal outcry of disapprobation, and the almost unanimous vote against it of the State Council, including several members of the Imperial family.

Count Dmitry Tolstoi struck the note of autocratic reaction so well, and his anti-popular policy so completely suited the tastes of the Tzar mujik, that his death made no change whatever, and we may say that his ghost continued to sit at the head of the Ministry of the Interior.

The new law was introduced first by way of experiment in six provinces. It was an attack upon the personal liberty of millions of peasants, and the Government wanted to see first how they would stand it. They did stand it, though not quite patiently, and the Government made bold to extend it gradually to the whole of European Russia.

The ukases of August 3rd, 1889, and of January 6th, 1890, create "in the interests of the peasants," special officials called District Commanders, who will be the "guardians" of the peasants' autonomy—guardians of a strange sort, as we shall presently see.

The District Commanders are nominated by the minister out of a number of candidates presented by the provincial administration. They

must be hereditary nobles. All other qualifications for this important post, education, and even property, may be dispensed with. But hereditary nobles they must be, if possible, local ones, and here lies the political meaning of this reform.

The District Commander has no power over the nobles or the middle-class people settled in his district. He is the chief of the peasants, uniting in his person the functions of both administrator and judge. He receives beforehand from the village elders a list of resolutions to be proposed at the meetings of the forthcoming season. He may add new proposals, if he thinks fit, and strike out those which seem to him objectionable. No subject can be legally brought before a village *Mir* (communal meeting) without his consent, and he has the right of vetoing any of the *Mir's* resolutions. The law gives him no right of substituting his own resolutions for those of the *Mir*, but he can impose them by vetoing all the others.

The District Commander's means of directly influencing the village *Mirs* are very great. He can fine and imprison any of the peasants of his districts (the elected officials included), by his own authority, "without formal proceedings," and suspend both elders and clerks from their functions.

Moreover, he is the rural magistrate, judging all civil and criminal matters, excepting those which belong to the jurisdiction of the principal tribunals. Finally, he is the "guardian," which means absolute master of the peasants' tribunal.

The last attribute is particularly important,

settled it in a somewhat illegal, but very effective way. In the province of Riazan the peasants laid hands upon their District Commander, Mordvínov, who was too great a lover of the rod, and flogged him in their turn. In the district of Medín (province of Kaloúga) they set fire to the house of the District Commander whilst he was asleep. In the district of Shóuia (province of Vladimir) they beat him black and blue. In a fourth case they destroyed his property.

The offences against the District Commanders became very frequent, but unfortunately quite out of proportion to the offences of these latter against humanity and the rights of the people. I will not harrow the reader with the details of revolting brutalities on one hand, and hardly less revolting endurance on the other. But I must quote here one example of the working of the new institution.

In March, 1891, a number of peasants of the village Doljik (in the province of Kharkov), were tried by the Kharkov tribunal for riot and resistance to their District Commander, Protopopov. The judicial inquiry brought to light facts proving that the peasants had acted under great and constant provocation on the part of the Commander. To say nothing of floggings for which he could not be held legally responsible, because he inflicted it through the subservient peasants' tribunal, Protopopov was in the habit of personally chastising the peasants, for which he had no legal pretext. It was his practice to make a free use of his fists and his stick, to say nothing of bad language, threats,

and arbitrary imprisonment. At Doljik the peasants could not stand this treatment. When at the meeting of the *Mir*, Protopopov gave the peasant Starchenko, who disagreed with his opinions, a blow on the head with his stick, the crowd became excited. "Why do you strike the man?" they shouted. "You should explain and not use your stick." "He is beating us," others shouted, "let us pay him back!"

Upon this the crowd rushed on Protopopov and hustled him so severely, that the elder Dolgopolov and the rural constable Pribytkov had great difficulty in rescuing him. Protopopov shut himself up in the communal house while the crowd shouted and abused him outside.

This outburst of popular indignation was declared to be a riot. Troops were sent to Doljik, a number of peasants were flogged or otherwise punished by administrative order, whilst others, declared to be ringleaders, were taken to prison and tried for rebellion before the Kharkov Tribunal. Fourteen of them were found guilty and sentenced to severe punishments, including penal servitude in Siberian mines, long terms of imprisonment, and hard labour in fortresses.

The District Commanders, as a body, enjoy the particular protection of the administration and of the censorship which does not allow any unfavourable reports of their doings to appear in the press.

Only in exceptional cases, as the present one, when the tribunals had to interfere, the whole truth comes to light. After the heavy charges

which the trial of the delinquent peasants brought against Protopopov it would have been a public scandal not to prosecute him. The Minister of the Interior ordered him to be put on his trial, which, after much procrastination, took place in November, 1892.

A number of cases of gross abuse of power were proved apainst Protopopov. A peasant, Vorvul, had been beaten by him because he had not recognized him, and did not take off his hat quickly enough. Another peasant, Michael Sery, was beaten by him so cruelly that his own hand was swollen and he could not take off his glove. The peasants assembled in communal meeting at Folochev were told by him that he would "smash their ugly mugs" if they made an uproar, and he added that those who should complain or petition against him should have "their complaints printed on their mugs, and their petitions on their backsides." A number of other offences of similar nature were laid to the charge of Protopopov, who was found guilty, but was sentenced only to *expulsion from the service.*

The mildness of the punishment is a conclusive proof that in Protopopov's offence there was nothing very extraordinary. The use of the fist is an integral element of the patriarchal principle. Protopopov had merely exaggerated and pushed to extremes the element of "personal" authority which all the District Commanders take for their guidance. It is very significant that his counsel advanced as an extenuating circumstance, the influence of the reactionary press, which, in advocating and de-

fending the institution of District Commanders on the ground of its being a strong, prompt, vigorous, patriarchal authority, had turned the head of Protopopov, who wanted to put these admonitions into practice.

One could fill many pages with examples showing that Protopopov was not quite the black sheep of the flock. "A number of District Commanders acted in the same way as Protopopov, though they do not go so far, and they remain unpunished, or practically so," says the moderate and perfectly reliable *Vestnik Evropy*.

In Kursk a peasant had quarrelled with the coachman of a District Commander. Although the affair took place within the boundaries of the city, and therefore clearly fell under the jurisdiction of the local judge, the District Commander ordered the peasant to be brought before the village tribunal. Here the peasant was found guilty of disorderly conduct and sentenced to corporal punishment, which was executed on the spot, notwithstanding the protest of the Elder of the village.

The council of the province on receiving the complaint was satisfied with reprimanding the District Commander, although he had been guilty of flagrant breach of law and abuse of power.

An interesting illustration of the views of the District Commanders upon the character of their authority is furnished by the following story. The Zemstvo of Yukhnov (in the province of Smolensk) had founded in 1891 an Agricultural Council for the improvement of the economical condition of the whole district.

With this object the council acquired a store of seeds, chemical manure and improved agricultural implements, and offered to intervene for the purchase of improved breeds of cattle. The enterprise met with great success from the very beginning. In the first year various peasants' communes bought all the stock of agricultural implements and seeds and phosphates which were offered by the council, and orders for new purchases were received from all sides, greatly in excess of the council's stock. But suddenly an unexpected obstacle appeared. Whilst the Agricultural Council was discussing the letter of the commune Sidorova ordering 400 pounds of improved seeds and the same quantity of phosphate flour, the following declaration was received from the local District Commander Titov: "Not recognizing the usefulness of the peasants' intention to have improved seeds and phosphates and other similar fancies, I, as a District Commander, will prohibit the peasants under my authority from making such unprofitable outlay."—*Vestnik Evropy*, Dec., 1892.

The district commander Sukhotin (Chern, prov. of Tula) advised the neighbouring landlords that he can lend them at any time as bond slaves "his defaulting taxpayers," whom he undertakes to keep in "strict order."—*Vest. Evropy*, 1895, *N.* 3.

The establishment of District Commanders is one of the sorest grievances of rural Russia. The emancipation of the serfs was not a great success. Even the partisans of the Government admit that now. It did not improve the

material condition of the masses. But the former serfs became citizens; they recovered their personal independence and immunity from interference in their private affairs. This was a very great moral benefit. Now, without any offence or provocation on their part, out of absurd doctrinairism this benefit has been gradually reduced to a shadow.

At the same time it must be noted that this obnoxious measure, condemned in its infancy alike by public opinion and the assembly of the highest officials of the State (the State Council), has been a total failure from the point of view of the aristocratic doctrine which inspired its creation.

Count Dmitry Tolstoi and Katkov and the gang of the *Moscow Gazette* favoured it as a means of re-establishing the patriarchal principle of local authority, which was destroyed by the emancipation. The original idea of the law was that District Commanders should be elected from among the resident nobility. But this plan had to be given up at the very outset. "A respectable gentleman would not accept the post of a District Commander," the *Moscow Gazette* quotes the words of some peasants —protesting against it as a matter of course.

There are respectable people among the District Commanders. But the better men among the nobility shun as a body this office as much as those in the police. The governors were not able to appoint to the posts of District Commanders many of the resident nobility, because the latter rarely would accept it. So the ministry allowed them to nominate members of

the nobility of the province, who with our great distances were perfect strangers to the peasants whom they had to command. But even these failed to answer to the appeal. Out of the 600 vacancies for District Commanders, about one-third could not be filled by the governors in any way, and had to be appointed out of the rabble of officialdom coming from the four winds of heaven. And it cannot be said that the authorities were very exacting in the choice of these new masters of our rural population; 40 per cent. of the District Commanders are men who have got their education at primary schools only.

Yet, as usual, the Government pretended to believe in the success of the "reform," and a few months after the institution of District Commanders the next and last step was made for the aristocratization of the country.

On June 12th, 1890, a new law changing the constitution of our Zemstvos, or provincial councils, was promulgated.

Until then, as the reader may know, thirty-eight out of the seventy-four Russian provinces had provincial councils for the management of a few local matters, as roads, hospitals, supply of funds for primary schools. These councils, called Zemstvos, were composed of members elected by three different bodies: the land-owners (without distinction of origin), the class holding town property, and the peasantry. Now the peasants alone continue to vote as a class as they did before; but it matters little how they vote, for they are practically deprived of any share in the provincial autonomy.

According to the new regulation, they will merely elect two or three candidates for every vacancy, out of whom the governor, advised by the assembly of District Commanders, will choose the man who suits them best. These same District Commanders are empowered to convene and preside over the meeting that elects these candidates. This puts the elections entirely into their hands. There is no secret ballot, nor ballot of any kind, at peasants' meetings. The votes are given openly, *viva voce*, mostly in a lump, and they will certainly be given to those whom the District Commander recommends. A special clause prohibits the election of the District Commanders in their own districts. But the law puts no obstacle to their electing each other in a neighbourly way.

Thus the peasants, these supposed Benjamins of autocracy, are excluded from everywhere. Their noble chiefs, the District Commanders, rule at their Mir, judge at their tribunal, and sit for them at the provincial assemblies. The peasants have to pay and obey, leaving all the rest to their betters.

The old regulation (of 1864) gave the nobility an influence in provincial self-government which was quite out of proportion to its numbers. The nobility nominated about one-half of the members of all the thirty-eight Zemstvos.

The "reform" of Count Dmitry Tolstoi goes beyond that. The marshals of the provincial nobility, numbering ten or fifteen in each province, are added to the representatives of the nobility, thus giving the nobility absolute

majority. The Government nominates besides one-fifth of the members in addition to those elected by the different classes of citizens, and two special officials of the administration sit at the provincial Zemstvos to further strengthen the hand of the Government.

Thus the Government did all in its power to transform the Zemstvos into so many bureaucratic commissions obedient to a sign from the minister. The nobility was the only force that counted in the new Zemstvos, and it was expected that the exclusive and unwarrantable privileges granted to this class by the new law would act as a bribe to lure it over to the side of the Government. As to the millions of peasants forming the nine-tenths of the population, paying three-fourths of the budget and furnishing nine-tenths of the army, they are nowhere on the new provincial councils. The position of the peasant deputies in the new Zemstvos is more than subservient—it is degrading, since their immediate chiefs, the District Commanders, having almost discretionary powers over them, are also there.

The Liberal Zemstvos and the Liberal press have often protested against the admission of District Commanders to provincial councils.

"The presence of District Commanders in the provincial councils," says the *Saratov Gazette*, "has one serious inconvenience. The deputies of the peasants, as people who are their immediate subordinates, are afraid to express their opinions freely. With the suspiciousness characteristic of our peasants, their

deputies think that any disagreement with the opinions of their District Commander may be unpleasant to the latter. That is why no one who has been at the district councils, where sometimes a considerable proportion of the deputies are peasants, can fail to notice the passive submissiveness of the peasants to the opinions of the District Commander of their locality. Such a state of things is hardly desirable in the general interests of provincial self-government."

The reader will not be deceived by the cautious, subdued tone of the paper, which is published under the censorship. The "serious inconvenience" means a monstrosity. Imagine a council of any kind in which one member can have other members flogged. The "inconvenience" of such a mutual relation would render the very right of sending deputies a cruel mockery.

The peasants have been virtually excluded under the Tzar Mujik from participation in local self-government, even as they have been deprived of many other civil rights.

So much for their political rights. Now let us say a few words upon the economic conditions of the masses under Alexander III.

VII.

THE GREAT FAMINE AND THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE RUSSIAN PEASANTS.

IN 1891 the attention of the whole world was attracted to the condition of the Russian peasantry, owing to the breaking out of a vast mediæval famine in the whole of the Volga region. The harvest having failed, thirty-four millions of people, according to other calculations, thirty-seven or thirty-nine, were left without any means of subsistence, to face hunger and cold during the eight winter months. The situation was very grave. In the autumn, six weeks after the gathering of the scanty harvest in the provinces of Kazan, Samara and others, people were feeding on acorns, grass and bark bread. And in a few months over thirty millions of people were reduced to the same extremity. Taking the low estimate of 1*l.* as necessary to keep a man over the winter months, the total sum required to prevent wholesale starvation was about 400 millions of roubles. Such a sum could not possibly be forthcoming, and a vast and acute famine was anticipated, with all its terrible consequences. And the Government, by its silly

efforts to hush up the whole thing, seemed bent upon bringing people to the verge of despair.

As early as July, 1890, when the results of the harvest became known, the Zemstvos of Saratov, Samara, Nijni Novgorod, and Kazan sent to the Minister of the Interior detailed reports upon the situation, asking for large advances of money to save the population from the worst consequences of the distress. In reply, the Government sent to the Volga Provinces a special commissioner, whose mission was to hush up the matter, and to protect the Government from the demand of the Zemstvos. Of course, General Vishniakov fulfilled his easy task to perfect satisfaction, reporting that there was no famine in the Volga Provinces, and consequently no need of subsidies. This is the system usually adopted for hushing up unpleasant affairs, and it was in a fair way of being hushed up; the official gazette published a reassuring report of the conditions of the province supposed to be in a state of distress. The *Moscow Gazette* declared the "famine" to be a "Liberal intrigue," a fiction set afloat to discredit the Government. The editors of the papers received stringent orders not to publish, under the fear of suppression, and other administrative penalties, any news about the famine likely to "disturb the public mind."

A calamity of such an extent as the famine of 1891 could not be hushed up any more than a conflagration. It was bound to assert itself, if the Government persisted long enough in the silly efforts to prevent its being brought to public notice through the ordinary medium

of the press. But it was quite in the power of the Government to allow the distress to come to so advanced a stage that no efforts could prevent very terrible consequences. We owe it to Count Lev Tolstoi that the measures against the calamity, although taken late, were not put off until the case was past cure. He is the only man in Russia whose voice could not be silenced and against whom the Government dared not lift its hand, and it was he who compelled the Government to give up the policy of the ostrich.

He published in a Russian paper an article entitled "The Terrible Question," in which he pictured the danger of the situation; the scarcity of corn, and the absence of any reserve fund in the impoverished population, which had been living from hand to mouth, and could have no alternative but to starve or steal if bread were not forthcoming. He called upon the Government not to keep the country in suspense, and to state plainly whether there was enough corn in the country to keep the Russian people until the next harvest or not, and if there were not, to take immediate steps for getting a sufficient quantity of corn from abroad.

The conspiracy for enforcing silence was broken. Since one man spoke so loudly, it was useless to shut the mouths of others. The whole press quoted and endorsed Count Tolstoi's letter, and Vyshnegradsky found it necessary to give it a reply, stating that the quantity of corn possessed by the country was amply sufficient to keep the population until the following harvest.

This was reassuring to some extent. The export of grain had been stopped by an imperial ukase of September, 1890.

The corn possessed by the country could not disappear, and it was consoling to think that it was within reach. But this fact did not in the least solve the question whether the millions of Russian peasants would starve or not. The vast quantity of corn mentioned by Vyshnegradsky was *not* in the hands of those who needed it most, and to transfer it from the hands of corn-dealers into those of the famishing peasants, an equivalent of full 400 millions of roubles were needed. Without this sum the needy peasants could get no more profit from the corn stored up in the country than if it had been exported abroad, or were hoarded on the moon, unless they took it by force. But this was an expedient strongly objected to by the well-to-do classes.

The peasants themselves, with their traditional endurance and submissiveness, showed a decided aversion for this course of action, not in all cases, perhaps, insuperable. Those most concerned, at least, did not expect it to be so.

A. Potapenko, the well-known Russian author, in his sketches of the famine-stricken districts, tells a suggestive story. There was among the members of the Zemstvo he visited, an old man, known formerly as one of the most cruel serf-owners, who enjoyed torturing his peasants, and actually killed several of them. This was a criminal offence, and he was exiled for several years to Siberia. On returning, after the emancipation, he showed himself the

bitterest enemy of the people, and at the first sitting of the Zemstvo, convened on purpose to discuss the measures for relieving the distress, he made a fiery speech against giving any relief to "these drunkards, robbers, and scoundrels," as he designated the peasants.

"At the sitting at which I was present," says Potapenko, "as his huge, ungainly figure rose upon the platform, people expected to hear a similar outburst of inveterate hatred; but, to the general surprise, he began to speak in favour of prompt and generous relief."

"What does it mean?" asked Potapenko of a friend of his, whose estate was near that of the speaker's.

"It means this," the friend said, "a month ago the peasants came to ask him for a loan of corn. Of course he refused, and bad words passed between him and the applicants. And the famine in these parts is very severe. There are houses where there is literally nothing and no prospect of anything. Now, about a week after the squabble, his granary took fire and was saved almost by a miracle. Of course, he must have understood what that meant. Then, again, he sent his manager one day with a load of corn to the railway station, but on the way the cart was waylaid, all the corn was stolen, and the police could discover no trace either of the stolen goods or of the delinquents. These were indications of a kind not likely to conduce to equanimity. He took fright; there might be worse in store. He understood that it was better to protect himself with the help of public money."

Korolenko's book, "The Year of Famine," contains a significant portrait of a well-to-do peasant, a local kulak or usurer, whose feelings towards his destitute fellow-villagers are the very reverse of friendly.

On the absurd system of collective responsibility, the loan of corn advanced for the support of the destitute was to be repaid by the village commune in a body. If the poor have nothing to repay it with, the rich have to pay it for them.

Korolenko's hero, Potap Ivanovich, wanted therefore to repudiate all assistance (отбиться отъ пособія). But he changed his mind, owing, as he confessed, to "miracles," which occur now and then in the village. "A barn not visited by anyone would take fire by itself in the dead of the night, or a hay-stack."

"Bad times," he explained; "people look so fierce. A man who has never been a thief will try his luck in that line, and worse may happen."

The bread riots which took place in Vitebsk, Pskov, Astrakhan and Saratov proved later on that these apprehensions were not without foundation.

In higher spheres the disquieting reports of the governors of the famine-stricken provinces, and the eloquent figures of criminal statistics, shook up the apathy of the central Government, and induced it to take steps to prevent the worst consequences of popular despair and misery.

Thirty-four millions of people absolutely destitute, with death staring them in the face,

and nothing to lose, were a danger which no government could overlook.

The sum of twelve millions, which was mentioned as the maximum which the State could advance from the Imperial Relief Fund, was gradually increased tenfold. But this was only about one-third of the sum required for the relief of the famishing provinces. In other terms, the State undertook to feed one hungry man out of three. Where was food to be found for the remaining two? Public beneficence was the only resource that could be looked to. This was self-evident as soon as the papers were allowed to open subscriptions for the relief fund. But the secret wish and hope of the Government was that the money should be entrusted to its own agents and officials, under the control and direction of a special committee, composed of Cabinet Ministers, high dignitaries of the State, and presided over by the Tzarevitch himself—now the Tzar Nicholas II.

It was expected that such a committee would inspire confidence as to the proper management of the funds entrusted to it. So it would in other countries. But in Russia, the deep-rooted distrust in official honesty is quite proof against the fascination of big names. I have it on very good authority that when the representatives of the English Society of Friends came to Russia with the money subscribed in England, *ladies of the Court* privately advised them not to entrust that money to the Tzarevitch's committee. Only three millions were subscribed to its funds all over Russia during the nine months of its existence.

The Red Cross Society, by way of concession, was allowed to distribute its funds through special agents. The Society enjoys a good reputation, acquired during the Turkish campaign; but its staff was insufficient for the work of relieving the distress over one-third of the Empire, so that it had to depend upon the work either of local officials or men who were not known and could not be controlled. The Red Cross got less than four millions; yet, as it was soon proved by facts, thousands of wealthy people were ready to come to the assistance of their suffering countrymen—they only wanted the certainty that their money would reach its destination, and they had no confidence in organizations connected in any way with officialdom. The guarantee that would satisfy them, and for which they asked, was the right of managing the relief funds independently, without the interference of the Government. Nothing seems more reasonable or harmless. But for twenty-five years the policy of the Government had been, by fair means or foul, to keep the masses of the Russian peasantry apart from the democratic elements of society. To allow, under pretext of relief, free access to the people, to men and women whose loyalty was more than doubtful, seemed particularly dangerous at such a critical time. Now as Russian society showed clearly that it would not move in the matter unless its hands were free, the dilemma which stood before the Government was either to come to terms with society or to have no assistance on their part worth speaking of. As one may well have expected, judging by antecedents, the

Government preferred to let the people starve, rather than run the risk of having a few of them "infected with ideas of liberty."

Whenever put to the test, the Tzars, tribunes of the people, never hesitated in the choice between the interests of the people and those of their own sacred person. The Minister of Finance, Vyshnegradsky, expressed this policy in all its frank cynicism at the interview which he gave to the deputation from the Moscow Relief Society, backed by millions of roubles. The Minister not merely refused peremptorily to allow the society to distribute relief independently, but had the impudence to threaten to have any persons arrested who should be found engaged in this work in the country.

To arrest men as criminals for going with open hands and hearts to the assistance of their famine-stricken brethren was the extreme point to which crazy red-tapeism could go, but it could not be maintained at that point for long. It was impossible to outrage the public conscience to such a degree with impunity. At a moment when the whole of the educated class was burning with pity for the ill-fated peasants, it was not only cruel but dangerous to repulse the hands that brought bread to the starving peasants, their children, and old people. The Government had declared that it was unable to feed all. After such an avowal, to stand in the way of those who offered to do it was a monstrous crime, provoking both the peasants and their friends of the upper classes to revolt.

The latter did, in fact, rebel at once by disregarding all obstacles and starting the work of

relief at their own risk and responsibility all over the famine-stricken region. One may say that our educated classes put all their unemployed forces at the service of the peasantry during the terrible winter of 1890-91. Ladies who had spent their lives at Court balls and parties, and the "Radical" young students of both sexes; authors of world-wide fame and obscure village priests; aristocrats, merchants, burghers—all rushed to the villages, regardless of discomfort, privation, and exposure, to distribute the relief funds, which in most cases were entrusted to them by a number of friends. They defied the prohibitions of the administration, and the Government was bound to give way. For three months the red-tapeism asserted itself by trammelling in all possible ways the activity of these generous men and women. But on December 12th, 1890, a circular was issued at last, enjoining upon the administration "not to put any obstacles in the way of private initiative in the work of relief"—a preposterous order, which appears superfluous to the point of absurdity to an Englishman, and stands as a condemnation of the whole system which made it necessary.

Three months had brought about the transition from the speech of Vyshnegradsky to the decree of December 12th. Besides the moral impossibility of fighting the whole of Russian society upon such delicate ground, there was a special reason why the Government thought it advisable to reconsider its decision. Advanced and democratic Russia, which was the most eager and irrepressible in

its desire to get at the people, did not make any attempt to take advantage of the famine for fomenting disorders and riots. The fears of the Government upon the point proved to be quite groundless. In the face of the horrors of the famine, it was impossible for men with genuine pity and love for the people not to devote themselves entirely to the relief of immediate suffering. Educated Russia devoted to the peasants the assistance which was demanded by them, and in the form in which it was demanded. The gloomy year did not create a new step in the revolutionary movement, but it established a moral bond between the intellectual classes and the masses of the people, who for the first time saw their elder brothers in the capacity of true and devoted friends.

On the other hand, the year passed in the midst of the people left incalculable traces upon the minds and hearts of the leading sections of the upper classes. The great famine marks an epoch in the growth of the opposition. Two things became clear as day to Russians and foreigners alike whose attention was fixed by the famine upon our agrarian conditions. The first was that the calamity was due only in small degree to the accident of inclement weather, its real cause being the total ruin and disablement of the peasantry; and, secondly, that no effective remedy was possible as long as the present political system prevails.

To begin with, it was proved that the famine which brought so much suffering upon the whole of Russia was due to the falling-off of the harvest, amounting to *one-fifth* only of

the normal one. Quite a similar falling-off occurred in France in 1888, as proved by the official statistics, and the failure was not even noticed by the world at large, for it did not disturb even the surface of the national life. With us it has upset everything. If such a failure, which is within the daily chances of every agricultural country, throws thirty-four millions of people upon public charity, it is a proof of the total ruin of the whole agricultural class, which lives on the verge of starvation, and has nothing whatever to fall back upon. This is a fact which has been admitted and recognized in 1891 in Russia by the press, by men of science, and even by the Government. The official report, published in No. 188 of the *Volga Messenger*, says that it has been ascertained that the crisis through which the Volga regions is passing began virtually two years ago, as it was from that time that a considerable diminution was noticed in all the revenues from direct taxes upon the rural population. This decrease was the greatest in the provinces which later on were most severely affected by the failure of crops, and which require the most energetic measures for the relief of the distressed population. Thus, in the province of Samara, in 1889, there was a deficit of one million roubles in the direct taxes paid by the peasants. In 1890 the deficit increased to two millions. In the province of Kazan, in 1889 (owing to exceptional energy on the part of the administration), the peasants paid an extra 85,000 roubles to cover the enormous arrears of former years. By next year there was a deficit of over

two millions. In the province of Nijni Novgorod there was, in 1889, a deficit of 340,000 roubles, and in 1890 a deficit of 869,000. In the province of Simbirsk the respective deficit of the two years was 253,000 and 653,000. In the province of Saratov the deficit was of 22,000 and 377,000 roubles respectively, and so on.

The increase in the arrears of 1890, as compared with that of 1889, fully corresponds with the gradual falling-off of the crops. In the province of Samara the return of crops in 1889 was 48½ million puds; in 1890 it fell to 42; in Kazan, from 37 millions it fell to 27; in that of Simbirsk from 38 to 29; in that of Nijni Novgorod from 21 to 15 millions, and so on.

As a matter of fact, the crisis began, not two years ago, but at least eleven, because the year 1880 marks the epoch in which the results of the exhaustion of both land and people began to show quite clearly.

The Imperial Commission of 1871 established by its extensive investigations the astounding fact that the Russian peasants pay to the State in taxes about 45 per cent. of their total income derived from all sources, agricultural and manufacturing. Though nominally imposed upon property, this is no longer a property tax. It is a tax upon *labour*, differing from serfdom only in form. Out of his six days' work the peasant was bound to give to the State about three days. This was more than any taxpayer could stand. With the insecurity of industrial work and the fluctuations of the harvest, the peasants could not possibly make both ends meet. They contracted debts which absorbed

more than the greater effectiveness of free labour could give. According to the lowest estimates, the modern peasant has to work now for the State and the money-lenders no less than four days a week (Slonimsky). Thus the amount of gratuitous labour has increased from 45 to 66 per cent., and only 33 per cent. of his nominal time is left to the peasant for his own maintenance. The peasants were defeated in the hard struggle for existence. There are many and frightful proofs of their gradual impoverishment. Such are the diminution in the consumption of bread, the terrible mortality in the rural districts, which in thirteen provinces is higher than that of the towns, and in 1880 reached 62 per thousand.

The provinces which are now numbered as those where the distress is most severe, occupy a rather conspicuous place in the table of mortality. The highest is observable in that of Orel, where the average mortality reaches the frightful figure of 46.7 per thousand, which is far more than double the average mortality of London. The province of Nijni Novgorod follows, showing a mortality of 46.5 ; Samara, 44.6 ; Perm Simbirsk, Orenburg, Viatka, showing a death-rate between 43 and 46—all exceeding the average mortality for the Empire by 6 or 9 per thousand. Holy Russia, with her excellent climate and soil, has the highest death-rate in Europe, 37.3.

In Russia, the whole burden of the State weighs upon the agricultural population, the peasants. Those of them who depend exclusively upon agriculture were the first to be ruined, although their land was the best in the

country, and, indeed, in Europe. Now with us there is one unmistakable test of the degree of destitution of every district or village; it is the amount of arrears in taxes, for they are collected rod in hand with relentless severity. We need not be surprised to find that the provinces heading the list are precisely those which have become the centres of the famine; Samara, with arrears of 11¼ million, Kazan 7$\frac{9}{10}$ million, Nijni Novgorod, Saratov, having each about 2½ million. Simbirsk, Voronej, Tambov, all have millions of arrears, which represent hundreds of thousands of blows of the rod given to the destitute in the vain hope of extorting the payment of their debt.

A destitute peasantry means poor husbandry, and with bad husbandry there is no getting good returns. The average productiveness of Russian agriculture is very low; seed excluded, it is 2.9 upon one grain sown, which is about the limit beyond which agriculture is impossible. Now our agriculture has sunk below this limit. The "bad harvests" which are below that average are becoming distressingly frequent within the last decade. Very often they lead to actual famines. The Volga basin has been most often visited by this scourge. The much-tried middle Volga region, with the province of Samara for its centre, passed in 1873 through a terrible famine, from which it never could completely recover. Then, after seven years of fluctuating harvests, it was stricken with another famine—that of 1880—which brought it a few degrees lower still. In the eleven years that followed there were seven bad harvests to four

good ones, and of the seven bad years there were two actual famines.

The story of other agricultural regions is pretty much the same. Thus the famine of 1891 was but the last link in a long series. Russian agriculture and agriculturists began to slide downhill long ago. The general famine of 1880 gave them a blow which accelerated the sliding process. The famine of 1891 was the *coup de grâce* which hurled them down into the abyss.

The most serious and lasting effect of the famine was the destruction of cattle, the chief and only riches of our agricultural population. When the cattle are gone, a peasant has to give up his plot of land, and is turned a proletarian, "a batrak," whose position is hardly better than that of an ancient serf. Now millions of horses perished in 1890-1 from want of fodder, or were sold in haste by their owners for ridiculously small sums. In the provinces of Kazan, Tamboff, Samara, the markets were flooded with horses at six or eight shillings a head. N. Sharapov writes: "Simultaneously, all over the distressed provinces, the conviction spread like wildfire that further struggle was impossible. The selling of horses and cattle became a sort of epidemic." It is calculated that in most of the famine-stricken provinces there is only left one horse for every ten families.

The next year there was a falling-off of the crops in the south-western and southern regions —in the provinces of Kamenetz-Podolsk, Kherson, the southern districts of the province of Pol-

tava, as well as in a number of provinces which have suffered from the famine of the former year —Tula, Orel, Kazan, where, according to testimonies of Count Boriatinsky and Lev Tolstoi, the distress, though less extensive, was much more severe than before. But much less has been allowed to come out as regards the new calamity, which certainly did not contribute to lessen its effect. With the very low standard of our agriculture, yielding the absolute minimum (three grains per one sown) below which agriculture becomes impossible, and with the complete destitution of the peasantry, partial famines must recur every year. The Empire is so huge the that climatic conditions cannot possibly be uniformly favourable through all its vast area. And when they are not favourable famine follows fatally and unavoidably. The Russians themselves will not call it by such an ominous name. They are used to seeing people eating for bread horrible stuff resembling dry manure, composed chiefly of husk or bark or pounded straw. In most of the provinces the peasants have recourse to such famine food regularly every year for a few spring months, when the old bread runs scanty and the new one is not yet gathered. A peasant who is able to eat pure bread all the year round is considered, and considers himself, a wealthy man. At the slightest falling-off in the harvest, the "wealthy" pass into the ranks of the poor, and the poor ones fall into a state of utter destitution and wholesale ruin. What the year 1890-91 has shown us on a gigantic scale is repeated every year on a smaller scale. Every

year scores of thousands of peasants—sometimes hundreds of thousands—have their homes ruined, their families broken, each member having to go a different way for a chance of getting a precarious livelihood—the father to some wealthy neighbour as farm labourer, the wife and daughters to town to seek work in factories, and worse, the young boys being sold as "apprentices" to some artisan or publican.

No peasant is safe against such a fate; and with taxes amounting to one-half of his net income, it does not require a failure of crops to ruin a peasant. Quite independently of the fluctuations of the harvest and the pressure of general economic conditions, an ever-increasing section of Russian peasantry is disabled and thrown into the ranks of landless agricultural proletarians, which for them is the ruin of everything and the utmost degradation.

Alexander III., with all his professed love for the peasants, did nothing to improve their position, and a good deal to make it worse.

His Peasant Land Bank, which was to save the rural population from the hands of the usurers, proved a fraud, for it only increased the power of the usurers.

His intended reform of the taxes was a mockery; the abolition of capitation money and of the tax on salt was replaced by new taxes upon the very same peasantry. Sometimes it was made simultaneously, so as to make the irony of it even more evident. This was the case with the abolition of the tax upon salt, which was immediately followed by the

increase to eight millions of the redemption money paid by the State peasants. The high protective tariff enriched the middle class at the expense of the peasants, who had to pay double for manufactured articles of first necessity—cottons, candles, soap—and treble for agricultural machines and simple tools, like scythes. The reckless expenditure of money for the support of the nobility was also an additional burden laid on the peasants. Other despots have been clever enough to compensate the people for the loss of freedom by material comfort; Alexander III. enslaved his beloved peasants to the nobility, and made them pay the cost.

What, then, remains of the motto of Alexander III., "Russia for the Russians"? That the educated classes are excluded wholesale from the privilege of being considered "Russians" goes without saying. The Russia of Alexander III. had no room for them—that is well known to everybody. But on a somewhat closer examination, it becomes clear that the millions of peasants were not Russians either; they certainly were treated as if they were not. Who, then, according to Alexander III., were "Russians" for whom their country was not a harsh stepmother? They are represented by a handful of people, whom the Tzar took under his protection. The grandiloquent motto of Alexander III. ought to be amended; it was not Russia for the Russians, but Russia for a gang of self-seekers trying to fish in troubled waters, impecunious nobles, the rabble of officialdom—or, to sum it up in one word, Russia for the Tzar.

Only in one way Alexander III. was never slow in showing his active love for the Russian people, namely, in persecuting relentlessly all those of his subjects who differed from the bulk of the population either in race or religion. His was a reign of persecution all round.

VIII.

THE JEWISH QUESTION IN RUSSIA.

IT has been said by many people not Nihilists at all, that the name of the Persecutor would suit Alexander III. much better than that of the Peacemaker. Because the maintenance of peace was more of a happy accident of which any man in his senses would have taken advantage, whilst the persecution was a spontaneous activity, which is most characteristic of Alexander III., both as a man and as a Tzar.

Who was not persecuted during his reign? The Poles, the Fins, the Germans, had all their doleful tale to relate; the Raskolniks, although they were promised freedom for their decorative service during the coronation, and the Stundists, although they were the most obedient and peaceable of his subjects. But the crusade against the Jews is certainly the widest, most far-reaching, and most important of the exploits of this kind, which give its gloomy colour to the reign. At the same time, to foreigners, it is the least comprehensible.

Making allowance for the short-sightedness and tyrannical habits of our Government, we can account for the persecution of the Stundists.

A body of Nonconformists, not recognizing the supremacy of the Tzar in spiritual matters, may, and we hope will, come some day to question the legitimacy of his secular power. Spreading like wildfire, they are a real danger to the present Russian Government, which, not being much versed in history, may well entertain the wild hope of putting them down by brute force.

One can easily account for barbarity, however shocking, in dealing with political prisoners and exiles. Despotic governments, when frightened, can go to any length of cruelty. But here we have a whole race, millions of souls, who, after all, have never offended the Government, who do not question its authority, who have obeyed the laws and paid taxes, bribes, and all their dues. Why, then, are they so persecuted? Are they really so bad as the Russian Government represents them? Is the motive religious fanaticism, or blind racial hatred? Is the Government really responsible for these persecutions, or has it been forced to them by the anti-Jewish feeling of the nation? All these questions are interesting enough to be treated on their own merits in a thoroughly objective and scientific spirit, which an opponent of the Russian Government can adopt easily enough. When the actual offences are so numerous and aggravating, one is not tempted to invent offences.

The Russian Government is certainly not responsible—the present Government at least—for the existence in the south and south-west of Russia of very abnormal relations between the Jews and the Russian population, which create in those parts the so-called Jewish question. This

question bears relation to the whole of our history, and is one of the burning national, even international, problems with which every country has, or has had to deal. In Russia it is only more difficult and complicated because of the greater mass of Jewish population, and the general backwardness of the country.

There are 4,000,000 of Jews in Russia proper, not counting 1,000,000 of Polish Jews. Of this number, three-quarters of a million are scattered all over the empire, but the remaining three and a quarter millions are huddled together in the south-western corner of European Russia, in a vast *ghetto* called the Pale of Settlement. They form there a race within a race, living apart from the rest, and there is a marked hostility toward them on the part of the masses of Russian people. This hostility has undoubtedly a religious basis, or at least originated in religion. But it seems to me an error to represent, as most people do, the anti-Jewish movement in Russia as a manifestation of religious intolerance. Among the uneducated masses religious hostility toward the Jews undoubtedly exists in a latent state, and is stirred up purposely by those whose interest it is to work upon it. But the classes which are at the head of the Russian anti-Jewish movement have long ago outlived the period of religious fanaticism. With them the hostility toward the Jews is purely racial. With the masses the racial antipathy is also a much stronger ingredient in the anti-Jewish feeling than religion. Thus we may fairly describe the anti-Jewish movement as racial.

I hardly need say that the Jews, as a race, are

not a bit worse than other people. Whenever I hear the idle, wholesale characterization of Jews as a race of usurers, tricksters, and the like, I always remember Mr. David Phillipson of Cincinnati, author of "The Jews in English Fiction," who observed that the process by which the Gentiles form their notions of Jews is invariably thus: The vices, crimes, and shortcomings of individual Jews, no matter how restricted as to number, are fastened upon the whole race, while the manifestations of all opposite qualities, no matter how striking or frequent, are viewed as individual exceptions, and therefore are not taken into account. I beg to add that it seems to me that the same process is adopted by all races in their mutual estimates. There is no love lost between different races and tribes anywhere, each considering itself the only good and lovable one. In countries where various nationalities are mingled, and have many opportunities of hurting each other by their racial differences, their antagonism becomes so intense and so out of all proportion to the real differences between them, as to become positively amazing to an outsider. Among the Balkan Slavs or the motley population of south-eastern Austria one may study this queer manifestation of narrow-mindedness.

The Russian Jews have lived for centuries a life of complete isolation from the bulk of the population, remaining a nation within a nation. It is only within the last thirty or forty years that they began to read Russian books, go to Russian schools, and take interest in art, the

sciences, and politics. Nevertheless, they have already produced a number of men whose names are the pride of Russia. In music, in which this gifted race stands so high, we have quite a number of eminent artists, of whom I will mention those who are better known abroad. The two brothers Rubenstein, Anton and Nicholas; Vladimir de Pachman, and that wonderful boy pianist, the rising star of Russian music, and the heir elect of all its glory, the young Mark Hamburg, who produced such a sensation in London four years ago, and is sure to produce it once again before long. Antokolsky, the greatest sculptor of the age, the man about whom Turghenev used to say that if he ever met a genius, he was one, is also a born Jew. The Jewish race has produced no Russian Heine or Börne; but the present literary generation, which is the first or at the utmost the second generation of the Russian Jews that has been educated at all, has already given to Russia a number of eminent literary men, some of them prominent in their profession, like Semen A. Vengueroff; some standing foremost among their contemporaries, like Minsky, the best among our living poets.

Another, to me, far more striking fact, which speaks volumes for the high moral qualities of the Jewish race, is the participation of the Russian Jews in the struggle for Russian freedom. For more than fifteen years in the gloomy empire of the Tzar a fierce struggle has been raging, in which only the ardent enthusiasm and absolute self-denial of the few enable them to cope with the enormous forces arrayed against

them. There are thousands of educated Jews who have cast in their lot with our patriotic movement. This fact has greatly hurt the feelings of our Anti-Semitic ruler, and an edict was issued in 1885 making, contrary to all principles of justice, political offenders of the Jewish race punishable with far greater severity than Christians. But I never heard that this edict had produced any impression upon the Jews, and there are as many of them as before willing to give up their all for the freedom and better future of the country which is a step-mother to them. This is a fact that does not agree with the general conception of the Jewish character. Yet it was the outcome of the short experience of 1860-80, during which a generation of Jews passing through our schools grew up in friendly surroundings, mixing freely with Russians, feeling themselves men and citizens, and not a race of outcasts. Some of the best and most influential members of our party were born Jews. And when I remember their kindliness of heart, their pure ideality, coupled so often with a mind so subtle, flexible, and comprehensive, I cannot help thinking that Spinoza was not altogether a miraculous apparition, but a representative of the best type of the race. I venture also to surmise that in better circumstances the Jewish people would probably produce more Spinozas than Shylocks.

The common, uneducated Jew is neither better nor worse than men in his position and circumstances generally are. A Jewish usurer is exactly the same sort of person as a Christian

usurer. A common Jewish merchant is as tricky as a common Russian merchant. A Jewish artisan is like the Russian artisan in all respects, except that his face bears strong marks of his Semitic origin; that his nose turns down, while that of his Russian *confrère* is merrily turned up; that he is generally dark, instead of being fair; that his gesticulation is queer, and that he speaks Russian with a peculiarly unpleasant accent.

The hostility toward the Jews has its origin in the surprising tenacity of their race, which has preserved its purity through all its historical vicissitudes, and is quite the same nowadays as it was a thousand years ago.

The exceptional business capacity of the Jews, developed in the course of centuries by their exclusion from all other pursuits, has created everywhere a natural channel for the manifestation of that racial hostility. A Jewish middleman, whatever his special calling—trade, usury, banking—fulfils his functions as well as a middleman of another race. If anything, rather better. Being on the average cleverer, he can offer his services at a lower rate than his rivals. That is indeed the only reason why he beats them; but he beats them invariably, and that is the cause of his historical troubles. Everywhere the Jews almost monopolize the most lucrative calling in the community—that of middlemen. They come to constitute a class apart as well as a race apart, and racial hostility comes to embitter the struggle between the classes. The racial struggle is substituted for the economical struggle, and the worsted and invidious rivals of

the Jews, who only wait for this opportunity are accepted by the mob for its leaders.

In the Pale of Settlement the Jews, although forming but one-seventh of the population, have concentrated in their hands one-half of the wholesale trade of the region, and have almost monopolized the retail trade. Russians, Germans, Poles, Greeks, all have been beaten by them, and as a matter of course they do not feel very gratified by it. The lower middle-class, the Greeks in particular, have played a very conspicuous part in the anti-Jewish riots.

The Russian peasants are very peaceable and inoffensive creatures, too much so, indeed, for the interests of independence and good government. If left to themselves they would rarely, if ever, give vent to their latent ill feelings against the Jews in open rioting, but the middle class are there to egg them on. In the two most notorious riots, those of 1871 and 1881, in Odessa, both of which began in the vicinity of the Greek Church, the Greek merchants incited and headed the mob. The Russian merchants are the chief allies of the Government in Jew-baiting nowadays.

Since 1881 the anti-Jewish movement in Russia has entered upon a new phase, because the Government itself takes the lead in that war against one class of its own subjects.

Anti-Semitism is not a Russian invention. It originated in Germany, where it was elaborated by a certain class of scholars and philosophers into a social theory. Its real author is undoubtedly Prince Bismarck. It was he that inaugurated a reign of brute force such as

Europe has not known at any other epoch, even in the time of the first Napoleon. Force means right; the dominant race, simply because the strongest, has a right to get rid of a weaker race, if the latter happens to annoy it in some way. The wholesale eviction by Bismarck of Poles from Posen is a direct parallel of the wholesale eviction of Jews in Russia. The persecution of the Finnish nationality, started by the present Government in Russia, is just as unprovoked, foolish, and harmful to the general interests of the State as the persecution of the Jews. The one prepares us to see the other without much surprise. It is the same deliberate appeal to the selfishness of the dominant race with a view of transforming it into a sort of dominant caste, whose interests are identified with the interests of the State, while those of others are trampled down. Such a policy is immorality erected into a system. In the long run it is sure to bring ruin and dissolution to the State. But it is the last trump of a tottering despotism.

Alexander III. deliberately put barriers to the fusion of the two races. Education, to which access was at one time given to Jews, worked in Russia remarkably well for the removal of racial prejudices on both sides. It gave the best promise for the future, because of the great zeal of the Jews for education. There was a rush to colleges and universities on the part of Jewish youths. In some southern colleges the Jews numbered fifty, sixty, sometimes seventy per cent. of the pupils. In the universities of Odessa and Kharkov they formed, on the average, fifteen to twenty per cent. of the

students, and they were strongly represented in all other high schools.

Now Alexander III. has deliberately rejected this natural means of reconciling the two races. From some schools, formerly open to them, the Jews were excluded completely. In others they were admitted as a necessary evil, but only up to a certain low percentage, three, five, and in some instances ten per cent. of the total number of Christian pupils. If Christians lag behind, the Jews have to pay the penalty. In the town of Biely a Jewish apothecary wanted to send his boy to the local college. But the director informed him that there was for a Jewish boy only four-fifths of a vacancy, which meant that the last Christian ten was not complete, being two boys short. The father petitioned the Minister of Public Education, Count Delianoff, asking that the four-fifths of the boy might carry to school the other one-fifth of the boy, instead of letting the unauthorized one-fifth keep the entire boy outside. But Count Delianoff was strict; admittance was refused, and the father was compelled to send to the college two Christian boys at his own expense to make room for his son. But few parents can afford such outlay, and there are many towns within the Pale where Jews constitute from sixty to eighty per cent. of the population. Thus the new law means compulsory ignorance. I need not speak of the discouraging restrictions depriving the Jews who have received their degrees from practising in the professions for which they have been qualified.

The Government does not want the Jews to be Russianized. On the contrary, it wants every Jewish boy to feel keenly and never be able to forget that he is an outcast. There is a special edict prohibiting the Jewish boys from giving lessons to Christian children. In Minsk a Jewish boy of fourteen was expelled from the college because he was found guilty of teaching a peasant boy merely for love of the child. In the same town there lived in 1891 a certain Doctor Medem, a Jew by birth. He had two boys, the youngest of whom was christened, the eldest was not. Now the authorities prohibited the elder boy from preparing his younger brother for examinations, because the latter was baptized.

Nor did the late Tzar want the Jews to become Christians. In former times the conversion of a Jew to Christianity cancelled all his disabilities. But by a new edict of 1890 the rights granted to converts have been restricted to a qualified freedom of settlement, complete citizenship being granted only to the grandchildren, the second generation of Christians. The war against the Jews is not a war of conquest, but a war of extermination.

. . . . . .

Anti-Jewish riots have always occurred at long intervals in our southern cities, with their mixed, excitable populations. But they were unimportant and rare. They were ordinary scuffles, which take place between alien tribes everywhere. The one which preceded the outbreaks of 1882-3 occurred in Odessa in 1870, and did not provoke imitation anywhere else. During

the Passion Week, after the Mass, the Greek sailors and merchants attacked the Jews in the neighbourhood of the Greek Church. Being few, they got the worst of it. They appealed for help to the crowd of Russians, who joined hands with them. The riot extended. The troops were few; the police lost their heads. For two days the rioters could satisfy their lust for destruction to their hearts' content. At the news of the approach of the troops the crowd dispersed and vanished, leaving the authorities to wreak their brutal, stupid vengeance upon innocent men seized at random and flogged in the streets. The matter ended there. The isolated Odessa riot had no echo in any other place.

But what is most remarkable about the riots of 1882-3, which open the era of Jewish persecutions, is that they seemed to be contagious to a degree which no former disturbance of the kind had ever shown. There were riots in Elisavetgrad, Kieff, Balta, Ekaterinoslav, Smiela, Biela Zerkov, Uman, Skviza, etc., etc.

The whole of Southern Russia was embraced by them. They went even beyond its limits; one of the fiercest riots occurred in Kunavino, near Nijni Novgorod.

Was this a manifestation of religious fanaticism, such as is recorded in the annals of the Middle Ages, or was there some other hidden force underlying this wild outburst? One fact seemed to point clearly to the latter explanation. Everywhere, according to the testimony of numerous and unimpeachable eye-witnesses, the rioters set to their destructive work with the conviction that they were fulfilling some secret and

imperative order. At times this belief gave rise to very curious incidents. Near Skviry, a small town in the province of Kieff, there lived a Jew, Abraham Jultik. He owned a small flour-mill, and was on the very best terms with the surrounding peasantry. He was an excellent man, without any trace of that greed for money which people consider inherent in the Jewish blood. Being rather well off, and depending upon the work of his own hands, he often lent money to needy peasants, "for God's sake," without taking any interest; he advised them on points of law, and befriended them in every way. The Russian peasants are not blind pedants—the common people never are. They have their prejudices against Jews as aliens, as well as against officials, nobles, and the priests. But after a time these prejudices are overcome by every individual whose conduct inspires confidence. Abraham was the most popular man in the district, a general adviser and arbiter in many family disputes. The peasants never gave him any reason for complaint. Great was therefore his surprise when, soon after the Anti-Jewish riots in Kieff, a crowd of peasants came to his mill and told him that their object was to break his mill to pieces and loot his house. Abraham protested, expostulated, reminded them of his many services and of their friendly relations for many years past. The peasants admitted all that, and said that they were very sorry, but were bound to do it, because such were the orders of the Tzar. Abraham was educated enough to understand that such a notion was perfectly absurd. But his arguments were of no avail.

At last he hit upon a good idea. He proposed to go with a deputation of persons to the *Stanovoi,* the chief of police of the district, who, as an official of the Tzar, must know if such an order was given. To this the peasants agreed, and Abraham, with the elder and the sotsky of the village, hurried to the stanovoi, the crowd waiting from midday till late in the night for their return, smoking their pipes, talking with his family, and doing no harm. Of course the stanovoi assured the deputation that they were talking nonsense, and that there was no order for the destruction of Jewish property. When this was communicated to the crowd at the mill, the peasants declared themselves very much pleased, and returned peacefully to their homes.

The story is perfectly authentic. I got it from a friend of mine, a student, who spent his holidays in the district.

Another friend of mine, a Jewess by birth, who was assistant to a doctor, told me of her experiences in a village near Ekaterinoslav. By her indefatigable zeal in the service of her patients and disinterestedness, she not merely won their confidence, but even their sincere affection. She had many devoted friends in the village, especially among the women folk. They proved their devotion by coming one day to warn her that she had better leave the place where she was no longer safe, because an order had come for despoiling the Jews. The neighbouring towns had already done their duty, and the people of the place were saying that they must not lag behind. Deeply grieved, the

lady asked whether it was really possible that the peasants should do any harm to her, whom they have always called their friend. "Oh," the women replied, "everybody in the village loves you and will pity you. But what can they do? The orders are not to spare any one; and they must obey, whether they like it or not." The women offered to hide in their houses the pieces of valuable property she had, in order that she should not suffer real damage in case of the attack, which they considered unavoidable. Many similar instances may be quoted.

There can be no doubt that in 1882-3 the bulk of the Southern peasantry were under the sway of a superstitious belief in the existence of orders for attacking the Jews, just as in 1880 and 1881 they believed in the nearness of a millennium, when the whole land would be taken by the Tzar from the nobles and distributed among the peasantry.

So common was this belief that even the soldiers, as peasants by origin, shared in it. An eye-witness tells, that seeing the looting of Jewish shops in Uman, while a detachment of soldiers was watching the disorders without making any attempt to stay them, he asked one of them, why they were in the place at all.

"Dlya poryadku"—to preserve order—the soldier replied stolidly. "That the people who loot the Jewish shops should not break those of the Christians."

Whence could this absurd belief have originated? What can have been at the bottom of it?

Count Ignatiev, the future author of the

shameful May edicts, was then Minister of the Interior. I do not think one can call him a Jew-hater. That title may very well be bestowed upon the Tzar, Alexander III., who, when inspecting troops at Moscow, would order all the privates of Jewish extraction (a Jew can never rise in the army above the grade of private) to be consigned to the barracks, and even on his death-bed in Livadia could not bear the thought that some Jews in as bad a plight as himself were trying to restore their health in the benignant climate of the place, and ordered them to move out of the neighbourhood.

But Count Ignatiev? Could a man such as he was really have any genuine disinterested feeling of hatred? I doubt it very much. Yet he assumed the part of a Jew-hater to humour the antipathies of his master; and he has shown it in many ways. Besides, it became very soon known that he had a personal grudge against the Jews of St. Petersburg for having refused him an enormous bribe which he wanted to extort from them.

He was credited with a fierce desire to wreak vengeance upon the whole race, and one need not be surprised that by the Jews and some foreign writers he was held to have been the secret instigator of these disorders.

Mr. Harold Frederic speaks of bands of young men from St. Petersburg roaming about the country, and invariably appearing in a town a day or two before the outbreak of a riot, and doing their work of *agents provocateurs* so impudently that they could be easily detected.

I venture to think that it is all pure fancy. I

do not deny the possibility of provocation and incitements. On the contrary, in many cases there were undoubtedly both incitements and provocation, but local ones, proceeding from people who had some interest to gain or some grudge to gratify. But one cannot for one moment admit the possibility of an organized provocation, still less of one, proceeding from anyone like Ignatiev, as Mr. Harold Frederic seems to think. He was not a man to conceive and carry out a plan of such a diabolical vengeance, and it could not have been carried out by anyone without exposure.

The first outbreaks were spontaneous; they were the manifestation of a deep discontent within the masses of the people, who did not understand any of the real causes of their sufferings, and wanted some sort of outlet for their hidden fury. The Jews became the expiatory victims, pointed out by their racial prejudices.

The provocation of which Count Ignatiev was truly guilty was an indirect one; it was to his influence that was due the strange attitude of the Government in the places where the first riots broke out. No steps were taken to put down the violence of the crowd in its incipient stages, though it might have been done easily without bloodshed. The troops which were sent to the place of disorder simply surrounded the rioters and seemed to protect *them*, instead of protecting the Jews whom they attacked.

For such negligence, amounting to connivance, Count Ignatiev, as Minister of the Interior, is certainly responsible; and, if anything, it was bound to create within the masses

the impression that it was permissible to ill-use the Jews. And from this to the legend of the existence of a Tzar's "order," there is but a step.

People who are quite trustworthy, and do not mean it as a joke, assure us that the germs of the future riot were thrown into the masses a year before the outbreak took place, and this, curiously enough, had been done, quite inadvertently of course, by the Tzar's manifesto denouncing the Nihilists, and calling upon all his faithful subjects to assist the police in exterminating them. The official name for the Nihilists is *kramolniki*, which means in Russian, rebels, State criminals. Now, in the south of Russia the pedlars and retail traders, who are all Jews, are popularly called *kramorniki*. For illiterate peasants, who only heard the manifesto and could not understand fully the meaning of its long-winded pompous phraseology, it was easy to confound the two words and to come to the conclusion that the *kramorniki*, or Jews, were at the bottom of the mischief, and had to be exterminated.

The psychology of crowds is a very queer one. A suspicion, a suggestion thrown into it will assume sometimes wild proportions, get a life of its own, and become no longer governable or manageable. Yet I will not vouch for the explanation, and merely repeat what we find in the Russian press. To me the indirect provocation of the apparent connivance of the authorities in the riots seems quite sufficient to account for the wild rumours.

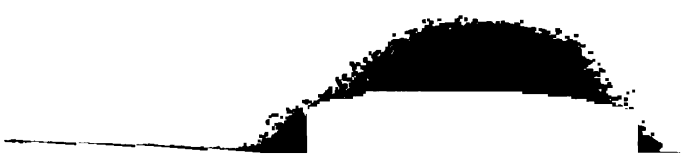
Then came Ignatiev's May edicts, which

virtually threw the blame of these riots upon the misconduct of the Jews, and, in the circumstances, could not but confirm the conviction of the masses that the Government was on the side of the rioters.

The iniquitous law was suspended a few months after its promulgation, owing, I believe, to the influence of foreign public opinion, which the Tzar, new as yet to power, did not at that time dare to disregard.

A contrary view is expressed by Mr. Harold Frederic, who maintains that the suspension of the May Laws and the fall of Count Ignatiev was due to the Tzar having got convincing proofs of the bad faith of his minister, and his gross abuse of power. The fact of his having offered immunity from the May Laws to the Jews of the capital for an enormous bribe of one million roubles is perfectly authentic. It was negotiated between him and the representatives of the Synagogue in the form of the purchase of one of his estates for a fancy price, exceeding its real value by one million roubles. I have the fact from a man who knew the whole story first-hand. Mr. Harold Frederic informs us that to him it was told by men who had been entrusted with the negotiations. He mentions the three reasons which caused the affair to collapse, of which the concluding one is the most characteristic; there was no possibility of trusting Count Ignatiev's word. He might have pocketed the bribe and not have fulfilled his promise.

The May Laws appeared before the stupefied world in their entirety, prohibiting hundreds of thousands of Jews from living in certain cities, as



well as from remaining in the country, on the plea that their presence was injurious to the native population. But Count Ignatiev took care to exempt his own estates from the effects of his own edicts by surreptitiously renewing the leases of all his Jewish farmers.

The Count's successful trick and the story of his unsuccessful extortion having been brought to the Tzar, the minister got into disgrace, and his edicts, without being repealed, were put into abeyance. Whether this was due to the latter cause or to the former, or both, it matters little. The Tzar's policy became more tolerant once again, but only for a time. His hostility towards the Jews was not altered. Now the ball comes to the player. Rulers easily get advice they are looking for. Eight years later Alexander III. lent his ear to Pobedonoszev, a man of incorruptible bigotry, against whom no damaging fact could be revealed, and he followed his advice unflinchingly.

The May edicts of Count Ignatiev forbid the Jews (1) to settle in villages, and (2) to acquire or rent real estates within the Pale of settlement. In 1890 they were revived under the following most aggravating conditions: The eight years' suspension was ignored, and the edict declared to have been in force since May, 1882. This actually was giving it a retrospective force for the full eight years. All the scores of thousands who settled in villages in full confidence during this period were therefore to be evicted.

But the evident intention of the Government was to expel from the open country in the shortest possible time all the Jews who were

settled there. This was manifested by a series of additional edicts, which rendered life utterly unbearable to those who wished to remain.

An early ukase of the Senate, November, 1887, explained that the right of residence granted to old settlers was strictly localized. A Jew living in the village A has no right to move his residence to the village B, half a mile distant. The right was also made strictly individual. Children cannot receive their aged mother or father coming from town or another village. The right did not extend even to the wife, although by the Russian common law all the rights and privileges of husbands belong to their wives. There are dozens of cases within my knowledge of Jews residing in villages who married in towns, and had been ordered by the police either to leave the villages or to send their wives away, for as town women they had no right to be in open country. Family ties, recognized as being the most sacred in the community, are broken daily in Russia where Jews are concerned. I will quote from the *Voskhod* (January 21st, 1891) a case of this nature in Kieff, where ten Jewish families were thus broken up. Ten women, wives of Jewish artisans, whose names are given in full, were expelled from the town, because it was discovered that one of them had one cow and sold to her neighbours a few jugs of milk, and the others tried to add to the modest earnings of their husbands by baking bread, sewing shirts, and the like, which they carried on market days to the market and sold. They were set down on this score as merchants,

and expelled from town in twenty-four hours, because only Jewish artisans are allowed to breathe the air of Kieff. And the husbands? The children of these ten families? Well, they could remain behind, of course. They were only Jews!

In the law depriving the Jews of the right of settlement in the open country there is a special clause, of little moment, but very characteristic of the spirit animating the late Government. I mean the clause which expressly says that Jewish patients are no exception, and that a Jew cannot go to the country, even temporarily, for health! People able to meditate upon and draw such clauses cannot be expected to care about breaking up Jewish families.

But let us return to the general measures against the rural Jews. One of the most important, and at the same time most vexatious, is the restriction of their right of movement. They must remain as prisoners within the boundaries of the district, if they do not want to forfeit their right of settlement. If they go to town and spend there only a few nights, they are liable to be considered on their return as new settlers and evicted on that score. Near Gomel there are many villages where there is no synagogue. In 1888 a number of Jewish families went to celebrate in the synagogue of the town. On their return they were evicted by the *ispravnik*, Elensky. This is the commonest trick, practised all over the Pale, and the Jews living at some distance from towns have either to give up religious observances or their privilege of residence. Young Jews who

have to go to serve in the army are regularly expelled as new settlers on returning to their families. The Jewish artisans, who have, according to law, the privilege of free settlement in all the towns and villages outside the Pale, are evicted wholesale under the pretext that it is not specified whether the general franchise includes the right of settlement within the Pale.

According to Russian law, no new building and no repairs can be made without the authorization of the administration. Now the administration refuses systematically all such authorizations to Jews living in rural districts, in order that the buildings may fall into decay. They must move to towns or live in houses falling to pieces. If the house is consumed by fire, they are never allowed to rebuild.

Arable lands and pastures, which means farms, cannot be taken in Russia on long leases. Twelve years is the maximum allowed by the law, although it may be stipulated that at the expiration of this term the tenant has a right to renew the agreement; but the land agents are expressly prohibited from registering such renewals when the farmers are Jews. As the May edicts extend eight years back, it is evident that in the current year (1895), all the regular Jewish farmers will be evicted from the Pale, because the new Tzar has not altered any of the anti-Jewish laws of his father. There is a considerable class of special farmers of Jewish extraction, known as *Chinsh* men, whose tenure and rentals are permanent, being based upon customary law. The *Chinsh*

people are virtual owners, the nominal landlord having no right either to increase their rentals or to evict them as long as they pay their rent. These rights are recognized in the case of Christians, but never in the case of Jews. There are, according to official statistics, 36,429 Jewish families holding small pieces of land by virtue of the *Chinsh* right. They are all now absolutely at the mercy of the cupidity or the caprice of their nominal landlords. The tribunals always decide these *Chinsh* disputes against the Jews, and the members of our highest class are not ashamed to take advantage of their helplessness. Prince Abimelek evicted a whole village, Pavlovka, district of Tiraspol, peopled for over thirty years by *Chinsh* Jews. The Princes Gorchakoff, Michael, and Konstantin, sons of the Chancellor, did the same with their Brailov Jews, who had been in undisturbed possession of the land for forty or fifty years.

Sometimes the outrages against the rights of property are accompanied by shocking outrages of moral feelings. A certain Mr. Demy, a landlord in Bessarabia, has been at law for ten years with the Jewish *Chinsh* people of Kopreshty about the piece of land upon which their houses and synagogue are built. The matter of the synagogue, the only one in the neighbourhood, and built over forty years ago, caused the Jews to exert themselves most strenuously. The affair dragged on, passing from one tribunal to another. The synagogue, pending the decision, was, as a matter of course, in the possession of the defendants. But in the summer of 1890, on

the eve of the approaching Jewish holidays, Mr. Demy persuaded the Police Inspector, Luchinsky, to take possession in his name of the Jewish house of prayer, and Luchinsky, knowing well that with Jews anything can be done with impunity, proceeded to carry out his friend's request. He arrived at Kopreshty, entered the synagogue, took possession of all the sacred rolls, and sent them in a cart to the police-station. Mr. Demy was then installed in possession of the Jewish house of prayer, and he immediately drove into it a herd of pigs, which remained there all day and the following night. The *ispravnik*, Luchinsky's superior officer, ordered the animals to be taken away, and restored the sacred books to the Jews. But the authors of this practical joke went scot-free. (*Voskhod*, February, 1891.)

These are facts the authenticity of which cannot possibly be doubted, for I have taken them from a paper published in Russia under the vigilant eye of the censorship. It is a very bold thing to publish such facts at all. It would be disastrous to invent or exaggerate.

At various times there have been attempts to form Jewish agricultural colonies. The plan seems to me to be somewhat artificial, and not likely to succeed upon a large scale in Russia—at least, where it depends entirely upon the manual skill of the husbandman, which requires a long training. The Jews do not shun manual labour. There are 300,000 Jewish artisans within the Pale, and 200,000 outside of it. Nine-tenths of the rest are pedlars, shop-boys, and the like, whose physical work is certainly no lighter than

that of artisans and mechanics. But it is very difficult for such workers to return to agriculture, and why should they? Yet these projects were always warmly received by the Jews, and, notwithstanding the most unfavourable conditions created for these colonies by the stupidity, suspiciousness, and meddlesome spirit of the bureaucracy, some of these agricultural colonies continue to thrive. There are about 50,000 Jewish farmers in Russia, but they do not find much grace with the Russian Government. They do not fall under the action of May edicts, but whenever the administration finds a pretext, the Jewish husbandmen are evicted as ruthlessly as other Jews. The agricultural colony of Sytna, which has existed for fifty-three years, near Minsk; Orany, another colony of forty years' standing, near Vilna; half-a-dozen colonies in Bessarabia and in the province of Kamenez Podolsk, have been evicted and dispersed. Thus a score of thousands of prosperous farmers, gardeners, tobacco planters, who worked the land with their own hands, and were an example of sobriety and diligence, were turned out downright paupers, the pretext being now that the land was rented—sometimes for over half a century—not owned; now that the village stood too near the frontier.

These facts are interesting to us from one particular point of view. The Russian Government and its defenders profess that Jewish persecutions have exclusively for an object the protection of the peasants against Jewish usurers. The claim is preposterous. In the Pale the Jews are the chief money-lenders, to

whom the masses of the peasantry are inextricably indebted. But outside the Pale there are no Jews in villages. Yet the masses of the peasants are indebted to local money-lenders and usurers of Christian faith as much as they are indebted to Jews within the Pale. Usury is a terrible scourge of agricultural Russia; but it springs from the general economical conditions of the country—exorbitant taxes, combined with insufficiency of land—which compel peasants to borrow money anywhere on any terms. The expulsion of Jews will result to the advantage of Christian usurers, who will be left without competitors. That is the only possible effect of the expulsion of Jews from villages.

The May edicts, whose working we have described, form but a part of a general plan of campaign. There are about three-quarters of a million of privileged Jews living outside the Pale—artisans, merchants of the first guild, members of the learned professions, and their families, to whom these franchises are given by the laws of 1865 and 1867. The next move after the revival of the May edicts was to drive the Jews out of the country at large, and the energy shown by the administration promises that very shortly most of these 750,000 will go to swell the Jewish paupers in the towns and hamlets of the Pale.

The richest Jews, the merchants of the first guild, are alone left comparatively unmolested, while the poor artisans gaining their bread by the sweat of their brow are the chief sufferers. There are no end of tricks resorted to in order to

deprive them of the franchises granted to them by the law. In one place certain handicrafts are declared to be excluded from the list of callings which the franchises cover. In Moscow the compositors were declared to be artists, and not mechanics, and therefore the Jews following this trade were expelled from the capital. In Smolensk the glaziers, vinegar makers, bakers, and butchers have been also declared not to be artisans, but something else—and the administration did not say what. In Simbirsk the Council of the Guilds passed a resolution not to give to Jewish artisans any licences unless they passed a special examination in their respective crafts. This was illegal and absurd, the skill of the artisans being proved by their certificates, and still better by their good work. But this was exactly what the Simbirsk guild-masters would not tolerate. Their special commissioners declared the Jews almost to a man not proficient in their trade, and the administration immediately expelled them and their families from the town. In Uffa the same result was obtained by the opposite means. Here it was the administration that took the initiative and declared all local certificates inefficient and void —for the Jews alone, of course. The Jewish artisans were requested to present certificates from the towns of their origin, which means from the Pale, which some of them had left twenty years before, and upon their being unable to comply with this foolish demand, they were expelled in a body. In other places the police pounce on Jewish artisans on Saturday, and, finding them and their families at rest, issue an

order of expulsion against them, on the pretext that they are not artisans, as they do not work with their hands.

An old law of Nicolas I. has served the administration a good turn for wholesale expulsions. This law is directed against a small religious sect—the so-called Sabbatarians, who keep Saturday as the day of prayer. These have always shown a great leaning toward the old Mosaic and Rabbinical law, and willingly accepted Jewish Rabbis as their pastors. It was therefore enacted, by way of precaution, that the Jews should not be allowed to settle in the localities where these sects existed. Now the administration has inverted the law. The discovery or the arrival of one Sabbatarian in a town is considered a sufficient reason for expelling all the Jews from the place.

This expedient was used for the first time last year in Samara. A Sabbatarian, M., was exiled to this town by administrative order. The day after his arrival all the Jews were ordered to close up their business and to be off to the Pale. The same trick was resorted to afterwards in Orel. Such devices are always tried elsewhere, if they seem worth while. Some day we may hear that the Government has used the Sabbatarians as a sort of Jew-killing instrument, scattering a few hundreds of them broadcast in all the towns of the Empire to render it impossible for Jews to remain anywhere. But it is just as likely that they will do without any such trick; when they have no pretext they will do the same without a pretext. The Governors vie with each other in the exhibition

of anti-Jewish zeal to win the good graces of the Minister. The Jews are expelled from Siberia, which ought surely to be considered a bad enough place for even Jews to be allowed to live in. They are expelled from the Caucasus, although the official statistics collected in the course of four years (1886-1890) testify that fully 60 per cent. of them are artisans and 10 per cent. manufacturers and members of learned professions. They are expelled from the newly-acquired provinces of Central Asia, where their help might do so much toward developing the local industries, and where they are undoubtedly a Russianizing element.

The mode of carrying out these evictions and expulsions is barbarous in the extreme, the underlings in their turn trying to distinguish themselves in the eyes of their superiors. In Kieff, in February, 1891, 1000 shop assistants and shopkeepers of Jewish extraction, with their families, were arrested and expelled in a little more than twenty-four hours, without being allowed to prepare themselves for the journey. At eight o'clock in the morning the police broke into their houses, awakening many of them from sleep, and they were immediately taken to the police-station. The shopkeepers were fined 1300 roubles each, the shop assistants 600 roubles each, and the next day at noon they were all packed into railway carriages and sent off to the Pale. These people were all respectable tradesmen, with legal licences, for which they had all paid in December, 1890. They had their shops in the best streets of the town, and were not accused of any wrong-doing. But

there is a new order prohibiting Jews from keeping shops in Kieff, and these people did not hasten to clear the ground on their own account without a special notice. For this offence all their stock was confiscated.

The chase after the Jews and their spoils is extended to the Baltic Provinces. Jews are expelled from Mitava, Libau, Jacobstadt, and Riga, sometimes after forty years of undisturbed residence. In Riga a rich merchant, Blumenthal, owner of three mills and of two large shops, had all his stock confiscated, and was ordered to leave within twenty-four hours. In Libau the value of the goods confiscated amounts to 200,000 roubles. In Dinaburg the administration, confiscating the stocks of the Jewish merchants, took possession also of 70,000 roubles of the "box-money," destined, according to a Jewish custom, for schools, and devoted the proceeds to the building of an orthodox church. In St. Petersburg the Prefect of the town, General Gresser, robbed the Jews in another way, by ordering them (March 15th, 1891) to change the store firm names they had acquired from Russians, putting instead their own names, "in order," the edict runs, "that the public should see at once that the shop is a Jewish one." In Moscow, on the nights of April 11th, 12th, and 13th, the police broke in upon 167 families, who were all carefully searched and sent to the police-stations under escort as criminals—mothers, children, old men—to be afterwards conveyed to the Pale. From a town in the Pale a perfectly trustworthy eye-witness writes: "Every day crowds of our people are

brought here, chained like criminals, ragged, hungry. The time allowed them for settling their affairs was so short that they could not dispose of their property. In Moscow suites of Vienna chairs, worth 4*l*., were sold for one shilling. Complete furniture for a room was sold for six shillings. The families were cast out of their houses into the streets, their furniture was thrown out, and they were left without shelter. It is just as bad as at the riots."

These are facts taken from private letters of friends and relatives, never intended for print.

I will not dwell upon the third measure against the Jews, although it is, perhaps, still more sweeping than the two former. I mean the wholesale expulsion of Jews from the fifty versts (thirty-three miles) strip of border-land along the western frontier. The same scenes, the same brutalities, the same misery accompany them. The ostensible reason of this measure is the prevention of smuggling. That there is much smuggling along this frontier is quite true. It is also true that the smuggling, like so many other trades, is chiefly in the hands of Jews. But there are 250,000 Jews settled upon that strip of land, and a quarter of a million people cannot possibly live there by smuggling. There is smuggling upon all frontiers. What would people think of a proposal to make it a desert by expelling the whole of the border population as a preventive of smuggling? And yet this is just what the Government is doing with regard to Jews. All are to be expelled, without exception. Even members of learned professions—lawyers, pro-

fessors, physicians, rabbis—are not allowed to settle near the frontier, the administration pretending to see smugglers in all of them. The total number of human beings affected by the persecution is therefore overwhelming.

English readers know very well from not very distant Irish history what human miseries are represented by the word "eviction." But in Russia we have not a handful of tenants surrounded by a friendly population, but over a million of men, women, and children, evicted or in the way of being evicted, helpless, destitute—a picture of suffering which defies comparison. We must recall to our memory the expulsion and starving out of the 800,000 of Mauresques from Spain to have an idea of what has been inflicted nowadays upon the Jews.

The 1,500,000 Jews cooped in the towns and hamlets of the Pale were never very prosperous. The greater number of them lived in extreme and sometimes degrading poverty, because of the fierce competition. The terrible, harrowing pages of the accounts of a commission of professors, published in the *St. Petersburg Economical Magazine* in 1882, are there to testify to it. We read there of thousands of men, women, and children living in hovels not fit for dogs; of families of ten and more huddled together in a room having sufficient air for only one person; of squalid misery, slow starvation, dirty promiscuity which makes one sick only to think of it. Now another million at least of people were thrown in, expelled from all parts of Russia—people entirely destitute, who come as competitors for public charity and for work. The

state of things brought about in these towns is easier to imagine than to describe. It is a starving out—one of those miseries seldom seen except in besieged towns, when pestilence breaks out and men return to the state of savage nature.

But material sufferings are not the only scourge of this unfortunate people. There is the paternal Government to goad them into utter despair by petty tyranny, extortion, abuse, insult, humiliation of all kinds. They are at the mercy of everyone vile enough to lift his hand against a defenceless people. In Odessa the Jews are threatened with exile if they have the impudence to try to get good places in the tramways and railway carriages. In Rostislavl they are told that they will be flogged upon the market-place if the Jewish children make a noise in the streets. In Kieff their hospital has been closed because it happens to stand within a hundred yards of a Christian church; a benevolent institution, simply because it is Jewish, being thus likened to a low tavern or a house of ill-fame. In the same town the Governor, a particularly pious gentleman, prohibited the Jews from passing through certain streets where there are many churches. When a small anti-Jewish disturbance occurred in the town, a handful of drunken roughs breaking into some Jewish houses, destroying property, and insulting the inmates, a deputation of Jews waited upon the Governor, who refused to take action, and replied in these words: "I am very sorry that disturbances occurred in my province, but I cannot prevent them; for the people

must once for all get rid of the Jews, who defile our holy town."

In such circumstances it is natural that the Jews should live in constant dread of riots. All the time rumours of new and drastic measures keep the Jews in a state of constant terror and suspense. The St. Petersburg press has announced such news as the contemplation by the Jewish committee of a plan for the gradual restriction of the Pale of Settlement; of the expulsion of Jews from certain streets, and of the creation of real mediæval *ghettoes;* of further restriction of the education of Jewish children; of closing various professions to Jews; of even a special compulsory dress, which would single them out among other people.

In a private letter from Vilna, we read: "It is rumoured that even the merchants of the first guild will be expelled from Russian towns, and prohibited from returning under penalty of flogging by the police without any preliminary trial. It is even rumoured that this brutal order has been carried out in some places. You will understand what is our position and what we have to expect in the future. We are all of us here as men who have lost their mind from grief, with eyes swollen with tears, looking with despair upon each other's faces. Our hearts are torn to pieces on hearing on all sides news about the suffering of our unfortunate people. Pen cannot describe all the depth of our misery. But you will understand it, I hope, yourself."

Foreign wars are an expedient often tried by despots to blunt the liberal aspirations and

deaden the internal discontent of nations. But war is a dangerous game, which may turn either way. The Russian Government has hit upon something better. In starting a sort of civil war against an enemy which cannot fight, it has avoided all the risks of a foreign war, while securing its advantages. But not with all the Russians. The truly patriotic, humane, enlightened Russian, without distinction of parties, social position, or creed, is indignant at the barbarous persecution of Jews, which disgraces our country and demoralizes our people. Even at the Court, among the highest dignitaries of the State, there are men who have had the courage and wisdom to oppose the present anti-Semitic policy. The Commission for settling the Jewish question, appointed in 1881 under the presidency of Count Pahlen, favoured the abolition of the Pale of Settlement and the enfranchisement of the Jew as the means of settling the Jewish problem in Russia. But the Emperor agreed with the minority, which was for a further increase of restrictions. The Bishop of Kherson and Odessa, Nicanor, delivered a sermon against the persecution of Jews as contrary to the spirit of Christian charity. He was reprimanded by the Holy Synod. The Rev. Mr. Nemiroff, of Moscow, who committed a similar offence, was dismissed. Count Lev Tolstoi's petition, in favour of tolerance and humanity towards the Jews, has been withdrawn from circulation by order of the police. The papers that dare defend the Jews are visited with administrative punishment. A circular note of the Minister of the Interior has been

sent to all the newspapers, forbidding them to publish anything against anti-Semitism. This is a fact which I have from perfectly authentic sources. One of our largest morning papers, the *Novosti* (News), of St. Petersburg, which was the most prominent in defending the cause of tolerance, for some time past has published no news whatever about the Jews in Russia. Thus the Government has well cleared the ground by silencing all who could say one sensible, humane word in opposition to the anti-Jewish outcry. The coarse, scurrilous papers trading upon the ignorance, racial prejudices, and superstitions of the crowd are, on the contrary, allowed free scope in vilifying and abusing the Jews, against whom all the evils of Russia are charged, the deterioration of the Russian climate and the shallowing of Russian rivers included.

Racial hostility is a feeling easily excited. In connection with the Jews there is, moreover, the question of economical and professional rivalry. The heads of our industries, in justice it must be acknowledged, have shown sufficient insight into the real interests of the country. In the well-known petition to the Governor of Moscow, drawn in connection with the expulsion of Jews from Moscow, the representatives of all the leading firms of that town asked for the granting to Jews of the right of settling in the capital, in the interests of Russian commerce, which the Jews have contributed so much toward extending. But how many there are who will be glad to have the dangerous rivals removed; how many who will seize the opportunity of trampling upon somebody for the mere

pleasure of feeling that they are something superior! No wonder that, after a while, the Government found itself not alone in waging its inglorious war upon the Jews. If in highly cultured Germany the Jew-baiting started by Prince Bismarck found supporters among literary people, politicians, and scholars, it is nothing surprising that the same thing was repeated in Russia.

The Russian Government has achieved a masterly stroke of domestic policy in starting the Jewish persecutions. It has but one inconvenience, the risk of provoking too strong a disapprobation abroad, both among the powerful Jewish element and all educated people of the civilized world. Hence the attempts on the part of the Russian Government to hush up, to make light of, or to completely deny the fact of the Jewish persecutions in Russia. Hence the constant repetition of alleged protests of Russian Jews against all foreign interference, their alleged rejection of all assistance except that of the Tzar himself, whom they are represented as trusting implicitly—a strange loyalty, which, if it were true, would give the lie direct to the accepted idea that the Jews, whatever else they be, are certainly a clever race. But it is not true, and I could bring many proofs to refute it. As to the Government, it seems to me that the fact that it is particularly anxious to have foreign agitation hushed up is a sign that it is precisely the weapon that can be effectively used against it.

The Jewish question is, above all, an international question, because it affects all nations.

For economical, political, and moral reasons it is the right and the duty of foreign countries to interfere. We representatives of the Russian opposition never wished for, or expected or advocated, foreign interference in Russia's domestic affairs. The Russians are fighting their own national Government, and no interference, except that of public opinion, can be suffered in that internal feud. But the Jews are not oppressed by a national Government of their own. Their position is strictly the same as that of the Bulgarians or Armenians under the Turkish dominion. If the diplomacy of the civilized world thought interference incumbent upon it, why should it keep aloof on the Jewish question? The only difference is that the Sultan is weak and the Tzar is strong. Will that consideration prevent the statesmen of the civilized nations from entering up a solemn protest?

As to foreign Jews, it seems to me that the present condition of affairs in Russia imposes upon them special obligations. They are bound to help their brothers in their extremity. Nobody denies that. One can only regret that the traditional timidity and diffidence of their race has caused them to avoid up to the present any energetic action in the matter. Let me recall a precedent. About forty years ago the first Russian political refugee, Alexander Herzen, settled in London and founded the first Russian free press and paper, called the *Bell*. He was a wealthy man, and before starting for his voluntary exile he converted all his landed property into bonds of the State. On coming to England he wanted to realize on these bonds; but it

somehow happened that the Government knew the numbers of Herzen's bonds, and the Tzar, Nicolas I., thought he could ruin his enemy by ordering the bank of the State to refuse his bonds as worthless. The bank obeyed, as a matter of course, although it was contrary to law. But Herzen found a strong man to take care of his interest, Mr. Rothschild the elder, who sent to the Tzar's Government a note intimating that since the bonds in question were in all respects as good as other Russian bonds, he would consider their rejection as an evidence of insolvency and would declare the Tzar of all the Russias a bankrupt upon all the Stock Exchanges of Europe. The Tzar Nicolas put his pride into his pocket and ordered the bank to accept Herzen's bonds. This story is perfectly authentic, and Herzen relates in his *Bell*, very wittily and in all details, how "King Rothschild sent his orders to Emperor Nicolas and the Emperor obeyed."

The present Russian Government cannot stand without being subsidized from without. It is a pity citizens of free nations subsidize it at all, for in so doing they uphold the tyrants against the people. But for Jews to support the present Tzar is the same as it would have been for the French capitalists to have subsidized the Prussian army marching upon Paris. The Jews control the money market of the world. By combining they might have cut off the Russian Tzars "with a shilling," and obtained what they will never get by supplication, solicitations, and entreaties, made sometimes at the expense of their dignity. There is no impressing Russian

Tzars by obsequiousness; they have been too much stuffed with it at home. The Jews should have shown fight, and they would have won the battle. But they did not show fight. An influential member of the Jewish community in London, to whom I talked once of this plan, said that it was not realizable because the Jews did not control the money market to such an extent as is generally supposed. Upon this I cannot judge. Anyhow, the Tzar Alexander III. met with no opposition, and had all his own way. He carried on his expulsion scheme, and no less than one million unfortunate men, women, and children had their homes ruined, and had to tread the painful, thorny pathway of exile.

The immense mass of suffering of the Russian Jews must be set entirely at the door of Alexander III. He was the cause of it, and it is childish to throw the blame of it upon such or such of his advisers.

IX.

THE POLES AND THE FINNS.

THE persecution of the Poles went on uninterruptedly as a matter of course without exciting much comment or even attention. People would have been surprised if under a Tzar like Alexander III., a nation embodying the idea of Revolution had been left unmolested. Every now and then the English and German press published brief bits of news about fresh severities in Poland, just enough to satisfy the reader that the prearranged order of things existed undisturbed, and that he need not devote more attention to the subject.

True: the fact that thirty years after the insurrection Poland was still kept under martial law was in itself a flagrant violation of the prearranged order of things. But on foreign subjects public attention must be caught at once by something striking and sudden, or it will never be caught at all.

The civilized world has contemplated unmoved the brutal efforts of the Russian Government to murder a whole nation by forcing the Poles to become what they abhorred becoming.

Alexander III. did more than persecute the Catholic religion and impose civil disabilities

upon its followers. His object was a thorough Russification of Poland, and his main efforts were directed towards the destruction of what constitutes the distinction, the pride, and the intellectual wealth of the nation—its language. For a nation which has lost its language is cut adrift from its past, and ceases to be a nation.

The means taken to stamp out the Polish language showed an unheard-of stupidity and disregard for the most sacred rights of man. It was made a crime for Poles to speak Polish in public places, streets, and meetings, or to teach in that language in any school, the primary ones included, although the children of peasants and working men did not know Russian. In Warsaw there is a home for the deaf and dumb, in which these unfortunate persons are given some instruction to mitigate their frightful isolation from the rest of their fellow-men. In 1893 the head of the educational department, Apukhtin, ordered that the institute should not be an exception, and that the teaching should be in Russian. The inmates had to be taught to spell with their fingers the Russian alphabet and compose with it Russian words. So that these unfortunate creatures, who were for the most part peasants, on returning to their native villages, could not make the slightest use of the training given to them at the institute, and were plunged again into that awful isolation from which their kind-hearted friends had tried to rescue them.

This is certainly a unique example of cruel and stupid official pedantry. But equally cruel and stupid was the general policy of the central government, for was not the partial suppression

of the sole language spoken by the enormous majority of the people equivalent to partially depriving them of all speech?

The Russian Government has committed many acts of cruelty and tyranny, but it is difficult to point out anything so cynically despotic as this forcing men into the condition of dumb creatures.

During thirty years this policy of oppression went on in Poland. But it seemed as though Europe grudged that unhappy country the absorbing interest of which it had been the centre in the first half of this century.

Even such acts as the massacre of Roman Catholics at Krozy, where Cossacks killed and wounded over thirty unarmed men and women, plundered a church, breaking to pieces all that could not be taken away—even such acts of mediæval barbarity and vandalism only momentarily disturbed the world's indolent apathy. No cry of *Vive la Pologne* was flung into the face of the Russian Tzars whilst travelling abroad. The Poles were left to defend their nationality and religion as best they could. And they were not found wanting. The policy of Russification failed completely.

A country of a higher culture cannot possibly be denationalized by a country of an inferior culture, no matter how great the disparity in their size. Colonization on a vast scale is the only means of permanently altering the ethnical physiognomy of any given locality. Now, Russian peasants with their primitive agricultural implements and primitive manner of life would be beaten in no time in competition with the

Poles, and finally starved out. With the skilled workmen of the towns, the artisans, the difference is not so great, but they cannot be tied down to any place, as the Government is unable to secure them any privilege to compensate for their natural disadvantages. The predominance in material strength is of no avail in this struggle. It is like oil and water in the same glass which are superposed by their natural gravity, no matter what effort you make to mix them.

As to the efforts to convert the Poles themselves into Russians by making them speak Russian, it was childish on the face of it, and only served to keep alive in all its intensity the hatred of Russian dominion in this often conquered but never subjugated country.

National feeling and desire for independence is as strong in Poland nowadays as ever, and the enforced familiarity with the Russian language has only helped the Polish middle class to take advantage of their industrial superiority over Russia, accumulating forces, which at the first opportunity will be turned against the Russian Government.

. . . . . .

While in Poland the Russian Government only fostered and augmented a hostile feeling created by the past, in Finland it has created such a feeling where it never existed before.

The persecution of the Finnish nationality, being something quite new and unexpected, has attracted a good deal of attention in this country, and has been constantly pointed to in the English and German press as one of the most foolish and shocking among the many

tyrannical acts of Alexander III. It was mean on the part of the Tzar of all the Russias to attack a small principality which was absolutely at his mercy. It was foolish wantonly to transform loyal friends into bitter enemies.

Finland is at the gates of the Russian capital, and the Finns are an entirely alien race. In fact the Poles have much more in common with the Russians than the Finns. To create another Poland at half an hour's distance from St. Petersburg is an easy affair, but hardly advisable from a strategical point of view. Nothing but good government can bind Finland to Russia, and it is prescribed by considerations of elementary political prudence.

When, in 1809, Finland was definitely annexed to Russia, Speransky, then minister and adviser of Alexander I., fully understood the position, and persuaded the Tzar to conciliate the Finns by fair dealing and respect for their national institutions. In 1810 Alexander I. solemnly swore for himself and his successors to preserve the ancient constitution of the country.

He did not exactly break his oath, though it cannot be said that he kept it. The convocation of the Finnish *Seym*, or Parliament, for a short sitting to pass new laws and listen to the report of the Executive, was an essential part of the Finnish constitution. Whilst Finland was a vassal state to Sweden, it was customary to convene the *Seym* every four or five years. But the statute fixed no definite period for its convocation, leaving it to the discretion of the Grand Duke. On the strength of this, Alexander I., whose Liberalism was of a short

duration, did not choose to convene the Finnish Parliament for the remaining fifteen years of his reign. The example was followed by his successors up to 1863, so that the Parliamentary recess lasted in Finland for full fifty-three years.

That this practical violation of so important a provision of the constitution led to no abuse of power on the part of the Finnish officials is a proof of the high standard of public morality in Finland. The Senate, which in Finland acts as both High Court of Justice and Executive, administered justice fairly, spent the public funds honestly and prudently, and, guided by the free press, passed many new laws under the form of administrative orders to meet the exigencies of the time. There was no interference on the part of the Russian Government in the organic life of the country, and the Finns put up with the despotic caprices of their Grand Dukes. In the great trial of the Crimean war they proved most loyal to the Tzars. In 1863 Alexander II. summoned at last the Finnish Seym, which, in a long sitting of eight months, made a thorough revision and codification of the Finnish laws.

This was done in the early liberal years of that unhappy and misguided Tzar. But whilst in Russian affairs he completely changed his policy, and, repudiating his early liberalism, became a thorough reactionist, his policy towards the Finns remained the same through all his reign, and he never had any grounds for repenting of it. He had no more loyal subjects than the Finns. Whilst the Tzar's capital and all the

big towns of Russia swarmed with conspirators, Finland remained perfectly quiet. Among the many thousands who joined the Russian revolutionary movement, we do not know one Finn, except those who were educated in Russia and thoroughly Russianized. When the revolutionary propaganda in the army was initiated, it was enough for those conducting it to hear that a certain officer was a born Finn to give up as hopeless the task of converting him into a revolutionist. The Finns were thankful to their Grand Duke, and did not mind what he was as the Tzar of all the Russias. It was selfishness on their part, but to some extent every one has a right to be selfish.

With the accession to the throne of Alexander III. the position remained unchanged—no abuse of their privileges on the part of the Finns, nothing to serve as a pretext for retaliation. It cannot be even alleged that the existence of a constitution in Finland caused any dangerous fermentation of feeling among the less favoured Russians. Finland is so far a foreign country that her anomalous position was considered as a matter of course, and did not impress the Russians any more than the existence of a free constitution in Sweden. The granting of a constitution to kindred Bulgaria in 1877 caused unquestionably more fermentation and unfavourable comments than its existence in Finland.

The encroachment upon the Finnish autonomy is but a part of the aggressive policy of centralized bureaucratism, which fancies it can transform the whole empire into a dead auto-

maton, obeying the will of the St. Petersburg wire-pullers. I have tried to show what havoc this despotic craze has made in Russia proper. In the so-called border provinces it does the same work under the banner—one would say, on the pretext—of their Russification.

Why one should wish to have the Poles, Finns, Germans, and Latyshes transformed into Russians, one fails to see. Their common country, supposing they should continue to be for ever united, would gain more by giving all nationalities free scope to develop their national genius than by bringing all to one dead level. But this is not the question we have to deal with. The fact is that Finland can as little, and even less than, Poland be assimilated to Russia. Russia can do it in the East, where her culture is superior to that of the natives; but not on her western outskirts.

The only way for Russia to increase her influence in these regions is to develop her own resources and culture, so as to bring it to a level with theirs. The present effort to bring about Russification by violent methods spreads the dominion of the St. Petersburg bureaucracy, and not the Russian influence. It can create nothing but hatred of the Russian name, it hampers the material and intellectual progress of many promising nationalities, and destroys the good which they have already achieved.

The Finnish autonomy has proved, in all respects, superior to the Russian centralization. According to her constitution, Finland has her own finances, coins her own money, negotiates loans, and spends her own revenues. Whilst

the Russian rouble is worth about 60 per cent. of its nominal value, the Finnish paper money stays at par. Finland can borrow money at 4½ per cent., whilst Russia cannot get it at less than 6 per cent. The Finnish national debt is purely nominal. It has been contracted for building railways, and spent with so much prudence that, whilst the Russian people pay over 40,000,000 roubles of guarantee money to railway shareholders, the Finnish railways, which are state property, pay their own debts, and leave a surplus, which is spent upon public schools. It has been calculated that each mile of Finnish railways, though built in a rocky country, with many tunnels and bridges, has cost, on the average, only one-third of what has been squandered upon Russian railways.

The economy and carefulness of public interests proper to a truly national government is shown in all branches of administration. Though burdened by the will of the Tzar with a heavy military budget, Finland spends 11 per cent. of her revenue upon schools, which is about six times more than Russia. Her system of popular education can be compared to that of the United States; it is obligatory and free in primary schools, which have their own trained teachers, male and female. Ample provision is made for higher education, which is rendered accessible to the bulk of the people. There are in Finland a university, a military and a naval school, a seminary, a number of colleges, women's schools, and three first-class technical schools, where the education is almost free. The fees do not exceed 1*l.* a year for all theo-

ethical and practical studies; but even these are remitted to all who apply for it on the ground of indigence, no matter how great their total number. Peculiar facilities are offered to those who wish to improve in some speciality.

No wonder that, with such a system of education, a country so ill-favoured by nature could hold her own and gain upon her huge neighbour. In 1854, the aggregate product of Finnish manufacturing industry was estimated at 5,000,000 roubles. In the twenty-five years that followed it increased sixfold, reaching the imposing figure of 40,000,000. The Finnish manufactures beat the Russian in paper, glass wares, and several other industries, causing protective customs to be created against her.

While in Russia the peasants, who are the poorest class, bear all the burden of the taxes, paying to the State about one-half of their income, in Finland the families having less than 300 roubles yearly, which is about the average income of a Russian peasant family, are exempted from taxation, and those who have more pay from one-half per cent. to 2 per cent. of their income, according to its total amount. Thus Finland was among the first countries to introduce a graduated income tax.

No greater contrast can be imagined within the boundaries of the same empire.

In vain the St. Petersburg bureaucrats decided that there should be no contrast. They began their work of levelling at the right place. The first blow was struck at the most precious inheritance of the Finns—the freedom of the

press, which was the guardian and guarantee of all their franchises.

By an Imperial ukase, the Finnish press was subjected to the St. Petersburg officials, and the censorship introduced, with all its cavils, stupidity, and arbitrariness.

The public has been deprived of news, especially of the most interesting. Thus the fact that the Finnish Post Office has been amalgamated with the Russian was not allowed to appear until four days after it had been officially announced in St. Petersburg. The newspapers were stopped every day, whole editions being destroyed by order of the censors. Official "warnings," which, if thrice incurred, led to the suppression of the paper, and other punishments are raining upon the Finnish periodicals, the censors giving, as usual, no reasons or explanations of their proceedings. The editor of the *Hufvudstadsblatt* has been fined for not having been in town when the censor's messenger called on him. The editor of the *Nya Pressen*, one of the principal newspapers, got into trouble for having handed in a French translation of one of his articles upon Finnish prisons to the Prisons Congress, assembled at the time in St. Petersburg.

The subjection of the Finnish Post Department to Russian officials means the violation of the secrecy of private correspondence, which had hitherto been respected in Finland, but never in Russia.

Several bureaucratic commissions were appointed, to prepare plans for the fusion of the Finnish Customs Administration with the

Russian; for the abolition of the Finnish coinage; for the introduction of the Russian language in schools; for the establishment of the hierarchical supremacy of the orthodox Church, etc.

The two first innovations were introduced in Alexander III.'s lifetime. The others were in preparation when his death interrupted the reactionary crusade in Finland, and allowed her to breathe freely.

X.

THE STUNDISTS.

IT is known that in the south of Russia there exists an important and very promising religious sect, called by the colloquial name of Stundists. Being entirely a popular movement, it is one of the most remarkable signs of the intellectual awakening of the Russian masses.

The translation of the Gospel into the spoken language of the people, completed in the second quarter of this century, owing chiefly to the efforts of the English Bible Society, produced in Russia a spiritual movement very much akin to that which resulted from the same cause in Germany, England, and Scotland in the times of Martin Luther and John Knox. Religion, which formerly was the business of a small class of professional priests, became all at once a subject upon which the thoughts of all the most earnest and gifted men and women among the people were centred. In Russia, moreover, the spiritual awakening, that resulted from easy access to the Gospel, coincided with a great reform—the abolition of serfdom, which opened a new era in the life of the masses of the Russian people. Whilst raising them from the condition of slaves to that of citizens, and giving

them many facilities for widening their intelligence, the emancipation rapidly destroyed the groundwork of the ancient patriarchal order of things. It divided the formerly homogeneous peasantry into two classes, the rich and the poor, with all the complexity of relations and the evil feelings which great inequality of wealth creates in the community. For an earnest, public-spirited man—and they are not few among our peasants—there was much to ponder upon, much to blame, much to deplore in the life of the new village. He would apply to the facts he observed every day the test of religion, which for him embodied the whole of moral and social philosophy, and of course he would find that the life of the people was in flagrant contradiction with the creed they professed to adhere to. The orthodox clergy proved almost invariably incapable of understanding, still less of guiding these sorrowing souls yearning after truth and purity.

The peasants seeking for spiritual advice invariably try to find assistance from their village priests, and are invariably disappointed, often repelled with gross abuse, and must turn for their only guidance to the book which is admittedly the corner stone of their religion. The greater the discrepancy between its teaching and the doctrine of the Orthodox Church the more imperative the impulse to secede from it. Since the great schism of the middle of the seventeenth century, which was caused by the narrow, purely ritualistic differences, hardly a year has passed without a new sect springing up somewhere in the forests and marshes,

to which the persecuted Old Believers repaired. But these sects were the meagre product of narrow ritualistic scholasticism and had no future before them. One must always keep in mind the dense ignorance of these people to account for their taking seriously matters so trivial as the mode of spelling the name of Christ or their way of crossing themselves.

The new sectarianism is entirely different. It evidently springs from the direct influence of the Gospel, and it is remarkable for its uniformity. It is the return to the simple creed of the early Christians, for which the Stundists are striving, so that one can say that this religious sect represents the type of the religious aspirations of modern reformers. The religious doctrine of the Stundists is much akin to that of the Baptists or Anabaptists of the time of the Reformation. They baptize only grown-up people, re-baptizing those to whom this sacrament was administered in babyhood. Instead of the communion they have simply "the breaking of bread," accompanied with singing of hymns. The wedding ceremony exists, but is a very plain one. Both communion and baptism are viewed by the Stundists, not as sacraments, but as "rites performed in commemoration of Christ, and for a closer union with Him." They consider the *Ikons* as no better than pictures, and do not keep them in their houses. They recognize only the Lord's Prayer. At their meetings they sing hymns of their own composition and psalms. As to prayers, they are left to the personal inspiration of the believers.

As regards their moral code, suffice it to say that it is prohibited among them to ill-use even dumb creatures. An observer says that once he saw a girl of eight, a Stundist, who rushed into the house, saying, with an appearance of great distress, that she could not restrain her little brother—a boy three years old—from throwing stones at a dog. The Stundists, like all Ruthenians or Southern Russians, hold land as private property, not in common, like the great Russians. Among the Stundists there is no conscious leaning towards collective ownership of land. But according to their religion, all earthly goods are not given, but, so to say, *lent* by God to men, who will be held responsible before Him for the use they have made of their worldly possessions. To prove faithful debtors men are bound to come to the assistance of their neighbours when they are in need, sickness, or affliction. It is well known that with the Stundists this doctrine is in no contradiction with their life, but on the contrary their lives are a confirmation and illustration of their doctrine.

One of the peculiarities of the Stundists is the perfect absence of national and religious intolerance. During the anti-Jewish riots the Stundists used all their influence to restrain the Orthodox from committing any outrage. There were no anti-Jewish riots in the villages where the Stundists formed even one-third of the population. Riabashapka, a common peasant, one of the founders of the sect, delivered several sermons upon the subject. In one of them (recorded *verbatim* by a lady who was present), Riabas-

hapka said to his congregation: "The Jews have received from God a law for their guidance. When they transgressed it He punished them. Perhaps they are suffering now for their own sins. You have heard how they are beaten, ruined, plundered. But God preserve you, brothers and sisters, from participating, even in thought, in such deeds. The Jews are the eldest sons of God. He punishes them more severely than the others. But woe to the man who will take upon himself to be the instrument of God's wrath! God preserve you from wishing it, and still more from taking part in these violences."

With regard to politics, the views of the present Stundists are easily formulated; they think that one must obey the authorities in everything, except in matters pertaining to religion. To show how peaceful is their disposition, it is enough to mention that at the close of their meetings they always pray for the Tzar. However one may dislike it, this is a fact which must be acknowledged by every impartial and honest investigator who has personally been with these sectarians.

It is evident that the Stundists are a perfectly harmless body, which does not threaten existing institutions, and even may be said to help in the preservation of public order by dissuading people from anti-Jewish outrages, by preaching against all sorts of bloodshed, rebellion, and resistance by violence. Besides, this sect is one of the most powerful instruments of a peaceful Russification of the heterogeneous population of our border provinces. The Stundists make converts not only among the Russians, but among

the Moldavians, Gypsies, Tartars, Jews, and even Poles, and every new Stundist congregation falls necessarily under the influence of Russian culture. The Ruthenians understand easily the Russian language, and the Stundists read almost exclusively Russian books (Ruthenian ones are very rare). The Gospel is invariably read in the Russian version, as published by the Synod. Even the hymns of their own composition are written in the Russian language, with a few provincialisms. In any case, all Stundists, both men and women, are invariably taught to read and write, and they all read Russian.

Now let us see how the Russian Government has behaved towards this most sympathetic, promising, and genuinely popular movement.

During the reign of the "liberal" Alexander II. they were persecuted unremittingly. The regular tribunals, whenever called upon to judge the Stundists, invariably acquitted them. But it did not prevent the administration from arresting them again and again, keeping them in prison, imposing ruinous fines, and exiling them to Siberia.

At the beginning of the present reign the position of all sectarians, the Stundists included, improved. The service rendered by the Old Believers at the coronation could not be immediately forgotten, and the Stundists, with the other dissenters, benefited by that comparative tolerance. But the rapid spread of the sect, which was winning over hundreds of thousands of adherents from official orthodoxy, excited the jealousy of the clergy and alarmed the Government. It is rumoured that with

Pobedonoszeff personal motives came to add to the irritation of a zealous upholder of orthodoxy.

To account for the latter we must throw a glance behind the scenes. It is known that in 1887 Mr. Pobedonoszeff was on the point of falling into disgrace. This was due to two circumstances. We will not dwell upon the first, as it is strictly private. Suffice it to say that, thanks to a court intrigue we had better not mention, the Tzar was shown an authentic letter of Pobedonoszeff, in which the latter boasted that he could make his Master sign anything he wished. At the same time the Tzar was much incensed against Pobedonoszeff for his being worsted in polemics by the Evangelical Society.

The persecution of the Lutherans in the Baltic provinces caused the Evangelical Society to write an address to the Russian Holy Synod. Pobedonoszeff replied, but so poorly, that he exposed himself to a crushing rejoinder from the Evangelical Divine.

It was rumoured at this time that Pobedonoszeff would be dismissed altogether. He got a two months' furlough instead, to compose at his leisure a reply to the Evangelical pamphlet. He made no reply, but he got out of the difficulty by resorting to a trick very often practised in Russian official circles. Everything is forgiven there, and condoned for some zeal in the cause of autocracy. Pobedonoszeff contrived to make a show of this zeal at the expense of the Stundists. With the assistance of a South Russian Bishop, Nicanor, and a couple of paid scribes, he concocted against these inoffensive

people the accusation of being traitors to the Russian Tzars, and emissaries of Prince Bismarck and the German Lutheranism. Such was the purport of the famous "Letter from Simferopol," published in the *Moscow Gazette*, which, after Katkoff's death, became the organ of Pobedonoszeff.

The grounds for these sweeping accusations were as follows:—(1) This sect was founded by German Lutherans residing in Southern Russia; (2) the Stundists have in their houses the portraits of the Emperor William and of Prince Bismarck instead of the Tzar's; (3) they are wont to shave their beards in order to look like Germans.

It must be observed that all the Ruthenians are wont to shave their beards, the orthodox as well as sectarians. As to the obnoxious portraits, being comparatively educated people, who read the newspapers, they might well have portraits of men of prominence in European politics. As to the influence of the German Protestants (Baptists and not Lutherans), it was quite fortuitous, and disappeared after the first few years, the sect becoming thoroughly national.

The Stundists held a general council, and sent to the Synod a petition expressing their wish to join officially the German sect of Baptists, which is fully tolerated in Russia. In fact, there is a great similitude in the rites of the two sects. As to the Stundist catechism, it was simply a translation of the catechism of the Tiflis Baptists.

As might have been expected, it was Pobedonoszeff who replied instead of the Synod.

His reply was rough and peremptory. He begins by declaring that there is nothing in common between the Stundists and the Baptists, thus showing his complete ignorance of the tenets of both sects, and he finishes by ordering the Stundists not to trouble their superiors in the future.

Persecutions were resolved upon, and they broke out everywhere. The "missionaries" were personated by policemen, who broke into the houses of the brethren, dispersing their assemblies, arresting the peaceful Stundists, who were thrown into prisons, exiled to Siberia without trial, and treated like the worst criminals.

A Russian exile, whose name cannot be revealed, in his recollections published by the Friends of Russian Freedom, tells the following incident:—

"On the way to Kiev, two men in chains and with shaven heads were placed in our railway carriage; their wives accompanied them, one with four children, the other with three; the eldest boy was twelve years old. The appearance of these prisoners instantly attracted our attention; both of them had fine faces, and there was a quiet, straightforward look about them, which impressed us pleasantly.

"On seeing us, they at once asked us what we were, and when we answered, 'Socialists,' their faces brightened and they held out their hands to us, calling us brothers. They were members of the religious sect of *Stundists* or Evangelicals, and had been tried several years ago in the district of Chigirin, as being among the first pro-

moters of heresy. Their sentence was: transport to the Caucasus and forfeiture of all civil rights (which accounted for their being shaven and chained). When the priest of their parish accused them of heresy, they were dragged, with blows and insults, through their village, and brought before the authorities. In prison they were treated with a barbarity worthy of the middle ages; the priest who had denounced them, struck them in the face, demanding the names of their co-religionists. While waiting for trial, they were deprived of their one consolation, the Gospel, though by law every prisoner may possess it. On arriving at Kiev we bought a New Testament, and gave it to them with the consent of the official in charge. Their delight on receiving our present, and the passion with which they at once began their propaganda, was something to remember."

This statement is very valuable as a testimony of an eye-witness that Stundists are put in chains and have their heads shaven like the convicts in the mines. As to the fact that thousands of Stundists are exiled to Siberia and the Caucasus by mere administrative order, it needs no confirmation by an eye-witness, as it is admitted officially.

Not satisfied with direct persecutions, the police and the clergy are not ashamed to let loose upon the unfortunate Stundists the orthodox mob, which is encouraged and incited to commit the grossest outrages upon them. At the instigation and in the presence of priests, Stundists have been flogged over and over again by the orthodox peasants, to compel them

to cross themselves, or drink brandy or smoke tobacco, or commit anything contrary to their creed or rules of life.

An English missionary whose name I cannot mention, as he has returned to Russia, told me cases where Stundists of the province of Kherson have been frozen to death by the orthodox, who in the heart of the winter poured water upon them by way of mock baptism.

George Lazarev has told in "Free Russia" the touching story of Elisey Sukhach, a Stundist, whom he knew intimately, and whose story he heard from his own lips. Before being converted to the Stunda, Elisey was a fervid orthodox believer, much devoted to the interests of the Church and those of the village priest. His desertion irritated the latter exceedingly, and transformed his former good-will towards Elisey into violent hatred. The priest preached untiringly against him, denouncing him as an enemy of God whom it is sinful to leave unmolested. One of the most vehement of such sermons was delivered at the ceremony of the Benediction of Waters, which takes place on January 6th, when the frost is at its bitterest in Russia. The crowd got so excited that it rushed to the houses of the two Stundists, Elisey and another peasant, demolished their cottages, breaking to pieces every bit of furniture, and then dragged the two Stundists to the river, where the priest was awaiting them. He began by asking them whether they abjured their heresy. On their making an open profession of their faith, he ordered them to be plunged into the ice-cold water through a

hole made in the thick ice, repeating it three times, as is done at the baptism, and asking them each time whether they would abjure their heresy.

In the province of Kiev, the efforts on the part of the authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical, to arouse the wild beast in men brought forth fruit. The outrages committed there upon the innocent Stundist men and women defy description, and must be told in the victims' own words. At times they are so horrible that they cannot be told at all.

In September, 1892, the Stundists of one of the districts in the province of Kiev, sent to the Pennsylvanian Friends, and to several other bodies, whose addresses they obtained, a series of letters which are one wail of distress.

Having no one to defend them, they appeal to the public opinion of the distant world.

"We implore you, beloved brothers, with tears," begins the first letter, "take this account of ours or give it to somebody who can cry out loudly, and perhaps people will hear us in our terrible distress. Because we are, as it were, stifled and cannot cry out ourselves, and awful and unspeakable is our distress."

This appeal bears the signature of all the members of the Stundists' community. Then come individual letters of those who have been especially victimized.

Elias Lisovoi writes as follows: "I declare to you, beloved brothers, what is done with us here. The elder of the village, the village constable (*uriadnik*), and other drunkards torment us pitilessly. Every day they send us to public

works in Babenzy and in our village. And we, men, are sent out every night as watchmen. And these cruel drunkards—the village authorities—come to our houses whilst we are not in and frighten our children, and do evil things to our women. Late in the night, from September 11th to 12th, they came to my wife Xenia, and tormented her as they chose, as it is told in the Bible about Susan. Only they did worse. Protect us, O Lord! It is terrible even to speak of it. They threw her on the floor and then they outraged her. The drunken companions of the elder did it first and then the elder himself. Then they compelled her to make the sign of the cross, threatening in case of refusal to outrage her again. They outraged the poor woman, and she was with child. They dislocated her hands, wounded her body, and left her almost dead. They broke all the plates and kitchen things and all the windows. Up to the present our houses are without windows.

"We beg you, brothers, with tears, help us. Do it as soon as you can. Do not make any delay. They are tormenting us so. We implore you with tears to take our cause to heart. Perhaps our Heavenly Father will help us and protect us in His mercy."

The signature follows.

This case is but a sample of the outrages endured by the Stundists during several months.

We have upon this a statement from the leaders and representatives of the Stundist Church, giving a detailed account of the barbarities committed, with names and details showing that the guilt cannot be laid to the

charge of ignorant subordinate officials and their besotted assistants only.

The persecutions of the brethren in the village Kapustnizy began on August 17th, 1892, when the village authorities sent them in a body to forced labour on the public works, partly in their own village, partly in Babenzy and Borshchagovka. They had to repair public buildings. The men did the wood-work, the women and children — some only ten and twelve years old—plastered the walls, worked the clay, etc. Many of the women had their babies with them, so that they had to carry on one arm the child, on the other a bundle of wood, and the overseers sometimes struck the poor women to make them work faster.

It was impossible to leave the little ones at home, as there is no one to look after them, and the people were sent to work at a distance of four or five miles from their houses.

In the evening all the men had to go as night watches for the whole night; and to every two of the brethren an orthodox overseer was told off to see that they never sat down to rest, but walked all the night through.

"On September 2nd, the ispravnik (chief of the police) of the Skviri district, the stanovoi, the uriadnik,[1] and the elder of the district, Pantelei Skribuk, came to our place, and the village priest exhorted us in their presence to renounce our creed. As we refused, the ispravnik gave orders that we should be sent for as night watches every night and two days in

[1] Different officials.

the week for public work. But we were sent to public work every day. Up to the 16th of September we were employed for 106 days and 116 nights.

"On the 6th of September the priest came to the village school, and, having summoned us, began to persuade us once again to repent and baptize our children—to go to the orthodox church. But we did not consent.

The same evening the village elder, Emelian Ocheretnuk, the *sotsky*, Avila Shlapan, with a batch of about eight men, all drunk, came to the house of Kerik Zubko, where they behaved most disgracefully, abusing his wife, shouting, making great noise, and filling the room with tobacco smoke. Then they went to the other Stundists, Elias and Dolman Lisovoi, Paraskovia Panchenko, and others, and were guilty of similar improprieties everywhere.

On the 7th the local uriadnik, the elder, and the sotsky, with a crowd of drunken peasants, came late in the night to the house of the brother Zubko, the uriadnik shouting, "Open the door, or I will break the window." And although his wife hurried to light a lamp and open the door, a window was broken before she could let them in. On entering the room they began to smoke, make an uproar, and sing indecent songs. The uriadnik abused Zubko's wife, threatening to cut her to pieces if she refused to be converted. He called her abusive names, undid her hair, and knocked her down.

In the same way they made the round of all the houses of the Stundists, ill-treating the women, who were alone in the houses, their

of these letters, which bears upon the attitude of the clergy high and low:—

"Your reverence, every public man is pleased to see the fruits of his activity," the letter begins. "Now your reverence can see full well what fruits your activity has borne. The reiterated appeals of your reverence, and of other 'shepherds' like yourself, whose characteristics are given in the tenth chapter of St. John, has found an echo in the hearts of the rural police in the province of Kiev. You may rejoice! The proclamations affixed by your order to the walls of the churches, inciting one section of the population to hate the other; pamphlets like 'That accursed Stundist' (*Proklyatei Stundist*), which is so zealously distributed by your reverence; the sermons, appealing to hatred and intolerance, preached by yourself and your followers—all this has at last done what it was meant to do. Houses have been destroyed; people have been tormented in every possible way. The new champions of orthodoxy have devised a novel means for compelling the women to make the sign of the cross! Shame and abomination! At the judicial inquiry the inferior agents alone will probably be found guilty. But who was it incited these inferior agents?

"In the village Pavlovky (district of Sumy), the *stanovoi*, together with the dean and two priests, were reproaching the peasants at the meeting of the *Mir* for their tolerating the Stundists in their midst. 'In other places in Russia they are torn to pieces,' said these worthies, alluding probably to the province of

Kiev, and evidently wishing that the example of Babenzy should be followed in their district. Is not this a direct incitement—'to tear them to pieces'? Fortunately, the peasants of Pavlovky, thanks to the newly-awakened faith in Christ, are no longer capable of heeding such incitements."

By the newly-awakened faith in Christ, Prince Khilkov evidently means the adhesion to his own creed. The village of Pavlovky is close to his own estate. His information is first-hand, and cannot be doubted any more than his statements as regards the activity of the archbishop of his province.

But does the responsibility stop at men like Ambrosius and Nicanor—who are most conspicuous in hunting down the Stundists? Certainly not. The bishops take their cue from the central Government, and their immediate chief, Pobedonoszeff, the confidential adviser of the Tzar. These two men have to share between them the disgrace of these abominations.

XI.

ADMINISTRATIVE EXILE AND IMPRISONMENT.

THE opposition in Russia has always been chiefly stimulated by sympathy for the down-trodden masses. If autocracy could make the peasants prosperous and contented, this would be an infallible means for preventing revolution. The feeling of personal independence is weak in Russia, compared with that engrossing pity and love for the masses into which all our social instincts seem absorbed.

But the bureaucratic despotism cannot benefit the masses. Despotism implies suppression of individual initiative, educational restrictions, obstacles to any concerted action, and general lawlessness, which must all prove most baleful to the class that has no means of self-defence. The peasants have fared very badly under Alexander III., as we have just seen; and the worse their position, the more favourable the soil for revolutionary agitation.

Judging by the evidence of facts, we must admit that the Government was conscious of this close relation between its sins against the masses and the danger of retribution.

Although there were no terrorist attempts to provoke reprisals, we notice through all the reign of Alexander III. a constant increase of precaution against his enemies. The system of administrative punishments, directed, as it is well known, against those who are merely suspected of being likely some day to become political offenders — this iniquitous system received a new development. Until then, exile to distant provinces, including the inhabitable part of Siberia, had been considered sufficient to protect the throne from the attacks of young people—students of both sexes who were only just legally of age. Alexander III. did not feel secure on these terms. An important aggravation was introduced in the form of *imprisonment by administrative order*, i.e. without any form of trial, without any proper examination of the accused, who often do not know either the names of their accusers, nor the exact nature of the charges which have been brought against them.

In the Wyborg district of St. Petersburg there is a prison, which is called colloquially "The Cross," on account of its shape. But it is not by the shape alone that it deserves to be named after the emblem of suffering. There is no worse prison in the Empire. The isolation is complete, the confinement strictly solitary, with hard labour, and prohibition of books, except those which the Government lends the prisoners. There is no communication with the outer world.

In the autumn of 1887 "The Cross" began to be populated with administrative prisoners.

In the beginning of 1888 "The Cross" had already twenty-five inmates; soon it vied with the House of Preventative Detention, of Shpalerny Street, the number of administrative prisoners immured there being already over a hundred, and now the prison is filled to its full capacity.

This is an altogether new departure in the efforts of the Government to stamp out opposition. The terms of imprisonment which may be thus inflicted arbitrarily are fixed at three years, a very long term, for Russians in particular, who, with their nervous organization, cannot support, as General Galkin Vrassky admits, more than six months of solitary confinement.

The experiment is new, and at first the terms of imprisonment inflicted by the administration were in most cases short—varying from six months to sixteen. It was rarely over two years. But *l'appetit vient en mangeant!* In less than five years this first hesitation has been got over, and the term of imprisonment by administrative order has been increased to ten years.

In the meantime, let me tell the reader the story of one of its first inmates, a girl condemned to what was then the longest term—two and a half years—whose case will serve as a sample for the rest, and will throw some light upon certain practices of the Russian police.

In 1888, a certain Bychkov, a Siberian exile, escaped from his place of banishment and arrived at Moscow in the autumn of the same year. He had little money, no passport, and

no acquaintances in the town. In this extremity he went into a small coffee-room near the University, and, after having observed for some time the people who were there, he fixed upon a girl, a perfect stranger to him, whom he followed in the street when she left the coffee-room. Here he approached her, and told her who he was and what was his position. The girl proved to be Alexandra Kopylova, a student of liberal views. She believed Bychkov's story, and promised to do what she could for him. But she could not do much. In October Bychkov was re-arrested by the police, who made a domiciliary visit at the rooms of Kopylova as well. Nothing compromising was discovered, except one copy of a Geneva revolutionary (Radical) paper, called *Self-Government*. She was, as a matter of course, imprisoned. But the police had nothing particular to be proud of. Bychkov himself was not a very great prize, for he was a simple exile, who had nothing more important against him than a slight connection with peaceful propaganda among the St. Petersburg workmen. The police resolved to utilize him in another way. After a long interrogation, Bychkov was taken to the district prison (*chast*); but here it somehow occurred that all the cells were full, and there was no room for the new inmate. The officer of gendarmerie declared himself much displeased, but agreed to the director's proposal to lock up the prisoner for the night in a room in the fire tower. It thus happened that Bychkov was confined in an ordinary room with a window looking upon the

street. It was rather high, but it was near the water-pipe running along the wall outside, and there was a slanting roof of the lower storey which could be utilized for the descent. The prisoner could not lose such an opportunity, and in the dead of the night, when he thought the house plunged in sleep, he opened the window and descended into the street, congratulating himself upon a happy escape.

But his position was still a very precarious one, for he had to find a hiding-place at once, and that was not easy at such a time. He thought of a man of good position, a Liberal, a Professor of the Moscow University, whom he had met once at Kopylova's room, and he went to knock at his door. He was recognized, told his story, and was admitted into the house.

This is precisely what the police expected, for the whole affair was arranged on purpose, and Bychkov was followed from the prison to the house where he found refuge. But he could not stay for long at the same house, and changed his hiding-place several times during the few days the police allowed him to roam about the town.

Of course all his movements were closely watched. When he was arrested, all those who had given him a temporary refuge were arrested likewise. Golzev, Nikolaev, and Sokolov were of their number—all men of good social position, professors, editors of influential papers, members of the Moscow Town Council. All were put in prison—Sokolov together with his wife. To the latter, unprepared as she was for this rather uncommon experience, the shock was

so great that she lost her reason after two months of solitary confinement. The others were released after a few months detention. As to Miss Alexandra Kopylova, who was the "principal" offender in the great crime of harbouring an administrative exile escaping from his place of banishment, she had to undergo a year and a half of preliminary detention, and then was condemned, without trial, by administrative order, to two and a half years of imprisonment in "The Cross."

"The Cross" is not the only place where administrative prisoners are immured.

In 1881 the "House of Terror," the Kharkov central prison, where the early propagandists were being slowly killed, was abolished in order to appease Russian public opinion, which was roused by the tales of the horrors which went on there. Its inmates were transferred in a body to the Kara prison.

Now the Kharkov central prison is once again reopened, this time for *administrative* prisoners.

The husband of the unfortunate Nadejda Sihida, flogged to death at Kara in November, 1889, died there in 1889. Among those who are pining there are Petrovsky, Alexandroff, and Chernov under the charge of "connection with the manufacturing of bombs," though the "connection" is very distant; in fact, they are merely guilty of not having turned informers at the first favourable opportunity. One of them *saw* where Orjikh was hiding three dynamite bombs. Another, Chernov, a man of position, and not a revolutionist at all, is imprisoned because a revolutionist, who expected to be

arrested in the street, left two bombs in his house *without Chernov's knowledge.* When he discovered what the dangerous parcel contained, he threw the bombs in the pond instead of going with them to the police.

As to administrative exile proper — that scourge of modern Russia—it has been terribly aggravated under Alexander III.

According to former rules the maximum of banishment which could be inflicted without trial, by a simple order of the administration, was five years. It is a long term, considering that the administration has full option of prolonging it, in case of "bad behaviour" and "impenitence."

But it seemed not enough, and the maximum has been extended to ten years, which means practically to a lifetime. Few will be able to outlive such long terms; so that the administration will be saved the trouble of repeating blow after blow upon its chosen victims: now they may be killed with one single blow.

This new measure has not passed through the stages which every new law passes in Russia. We have not even seen it promulgated by a ministerial circular, which, in Russia, has the force of law. It was enacted quietly, and revealed its existence by its practical application to several persons in 1887. Among the first to whom it was applied in full were Brajnikov and Sterenberg. Their crime was that both of them were *on very good terms with Boris Orjikh*, one of the noblest and most daring leaders of Russian revolution of these later days. Orjikh was the organiser of several conspiracies, the

founder of a secret printing office and of a dynamite manufactory. He was tried, with twenty-nine of his accomplices, on November, 1888, and condemned to death. The sentence was not executed on account of mere material obstacles: the two years of preliminary detention brought Orjikh to the verge of the grave, so that he had to be carried upon a litter to the court. At that time the Government had not yet discovered that a man can be hung from his bed, as was done with Bernstein, in Yakutsk. So Orjikh was sent to Schlusselbourg, where he died a few months later. As to Brajnikoff and Sterenberg, they were not tried, for the very simple reason that there was no proof whatever of their guilt. There was only *suspicion* that they must have *known* something about Orjikh's doings, and must have been in sympathy with his views, since they were his intimate friends—a very common charge in Russia, for which formerly people were punished at the utmost by five years of exile. The prolongation of the maximum means simply a general aggravation of penalties inflicted by administrative order. Those who formerly were visited with five years of banishment will now have ten, and those who had two and a half will have five. The examination of other cases of the infliction of the maximum terms of exile leave no room for doubt of this.

The Government seems to grudge the old exiles the shortness of the penalties, inflicted under former regulations, and has introduced some new methods of remedying the evil. As we have mentioned above, it was always in-

the power of the administration to prolong the term of exile for "bad conduct," which means for some attempt on the part of the exile to protect himself against the coarse and brutal administration. But since 1883 we come across a number of cases where the exile has in no way provoked the displeasure of the local autocrats, and yet had had his penalty aggravated in consequence of the *re-examination* (sometimes many years after) *of old documents*, upon which the administration has already given a decision.

This is a new proceeding, and however trifling, as compared with the total mass of wrongs done by administrative exile, it is worth mentioning, as a proof of the utter disrespect of the Russian Government for human suffering and the most elementary principles of justice—we may say, of public morality.

But why, the reader will ask, should the gendarmes burden themselves with ransacking the archives of the State police, when they have so many fresh cases upon their hands?

We are told that it is done as a good exercise for the young officers of this respectable body. When a young gendarme is admitted into the political branch of the service, they do not trust him with new cases, but give him an old one for re-examination to test his ability. He has then to give an opinion upon it, and if he discovers something which tells against the exile, and has been over-looked, a few years more are added to the latter's original term of banishment.

We do not vouch for the accuracy of the *explanation*. It may be that the old cases are

re-examined on some other grounds. The fact is that they *are* re-examined, and new penalties are inflicted upon the victims for no other reason. The unexpectedness of such new blows appears probably to the gendarmes in the light of a good practical joke, though for those concerned it is rarely a matter for joking, and sometimes a cause of bitter tears.

In November, 1880, Antimas Gomcralidze, an Armenian by birth, condemned in 1877 by the St. Petersburg tribunal to exile in Siberia, returned to his country after the expiration of his term. His crime was not particularly grave. In 1875-6 the police discovered in Moscow a "secret society," composed of about a dozen young men and girls, the oldest of whom was twenty-five, the youngest nineteen. Their object was the propaganda of Socialist ideas among workmen. They were all condemned to various punishments, Gomcralidze among the rest. Since that time for full sixteen years he had been dragged from one prison to another, from one wretched Siberian hamlet to another. His health was ruined, his strength broken. From a blooming youth of twenty-two, as he was at the time of the trial, he became a grey-haired, decrepit old man.

But he was in his country once again. The long years of trial were forgotten. He began to feel his strength renewed in his home. But he had not much time to enjoy his freedom. Before five months elapsed, in April, 1889, a large body of police came, and the officer told him that he was to be once again sent to Siberia. He was

arrested, and without any explanation taken to the Kutais prison.

The neighbours, for the most part small farmers and peasants, whom he had befriended as a physician, collected a sum of money, and sent a man to Kutais to make inquiries, and intercede if possible with the governor in favour of Gomcralidze. The man went, and succeeded in interesting in the fate of his client several persons of good position in the town. They spoke to the governor of the province, and to the local gendarme officer, who all seemed disposed in favour of the hapless man. Indeed, Gomcralidze could not possibly be of any danger to the "throne and the existing institutions" in the out-of-the-way corner where he had settled. The village where he lived was ninety miles away from Kutais, and sixty miles from the postal highway, so that he was as much isolated there as he would be in the Narym marshes, whither he was to be re-exiled. The only difference was that of a better climate, which was so necessary to his broken health. But the local authorities could do nothing for him. The order for re-arresting and exiling him came from St. Petersburg, and the reason was as follows:—

Three years before, whilst Gomcralidze was living in Tomsk, the pupils of the gymnasium (grammar school) had founded a small library of their own for their personal edification. It consisted only of books authorized by the Russian censorship. Not a single revolutionary pamphlet had been found there, or seen circulated among the pupils. Still, the small library

contained works like Thomas Buckle's "History of Civilization in England," and some of Herbert Spencer's. This showed that the boys were of a serious and rather progressive turn of mind. Still, the affair would have been probably hushed up if the discovery of the library had not coincided with the attempt upon the Tzar, Alexander III., which occurred in St. Petersburg on the 13th of March, 1887.

Panic-stricken, the superintendents of the Tomsk grammar school looked upon the harmless affair as a sort of political crime. A number of boys were thrown into prison on the charge of conspiracy and secret propaganda, and ordered, under the threat of heavy punishment, to confess everything, which meant to betray those who gave them books or money to buy them, or encouraged them in any other way. Gomcralidze knew nothing about this library. But in his quality of surgeon's assistant he paid occasional visits to the house of one of the boys who contributed a certain number of books to the common library. Being arrested, the boy named Gomcralidze as the person who gave him these books, on the childish consideration that since he was already a political offender and an exile, it would not matter for him.

The charge was not supported by facts, and the boy himself retracted it afterwards. Gomcralidze was summoned to the police office, but his explanations satisfied the local authorities, so that he was not molested, and when his term of banishment ended he was allowed, as we have seen, to return to his native country.

But in this interval the famous General

Rusinov—the man who is mentioned by Mr. George Kennan in the *Century* in connection with the obliteration of the inscriptions upon the exiles' tombstones, and the would-be discovery of a secret printing press in Yakutsk—this General Rusinov visited Tomsk on the pretext of inquiring into the condition of the exiles—in reality in order to report upon their conduct.

Together with other materials, he brought with him to St. Petersburg the documents referring to Gomcralidze's offence. Here it was given for revision to a young pushing officer of gendarmerie, who discovered, as he thought, some hints throwing doubts upon the correctness of Gomcralidze's former acquittal by the Tomsk gendarmes; and without any verification, without examination of the accused, an order for his re-exile for another three years was despatched to Kutais.

In 1893 Gomcralidze was allowed to return to his native place, on the expiration of his new term. But his health was ruined past recovery, and he died a few months after his return to Kutais.

The case is not unique. In 1878 a St. Petersburg student, Tutcheff, was arrested, and condemned, without trial, by administrative order, to five years' banishment in the Yakutsk region. His term expired in 1883, and his family expected him home. But he did not come, and in his stead a letter arrived informing the parents that his term of banishment was prolonged.

Then his father, a general in the Tzar's army, went to the officer of the State police to inquire

what new offence his son had committed to have merited a new punishment. In consideration of his official position he was received, and an explanation vouchsafed to him by the gendarmerie, and it was this: his son had committed no new offence, but they had re-examined the old document referring to his case, and, finding that the original punishment was inadequate, had added on for young Tutcheff another two years of banishment.

We will mention, as a further illustration of this curious practice, the case of Sineff, a private of one of the regiments of guards, exiled to Urjum in 1886, the police having discovered that he paid occasional visits to the former schoolmaster of his village, who proved to be implicated in some conspiracies. Sineff's term of banishment expired in November, 1888, but, instead of being allowed to return to his home, he was ordered to remain at his place of punishment indefinitely, "pending the re-examination of his case."

In 1887, an exile named Peshekherov, after having completed his three years' term of banishment in Ust Kamenogorsk (Semipalatinsk region), was returning with his wife and children to European Russia by permission of the local authorities, and had already reached Tomsk, which stands about 600 miles from Ust Kamenogorsk, when suddenly a telegram came from St. Petersburg inflicting upon him another two years of exile.

The Siberian authorities were as much surprised at this order as Peshekherov himself, as there was never any conflict between him and

the administration during the three years of his involuntary residence at Ust Kamenogorsk.

In 1884 a student, Raspopin, accused of "militarism," which means *holding the opinion* that the Revolutionists ought, for the good of their cause, to get as many commissions as possible in the army, was exiled for two years to Beresov, one of the most awful of Siberian penitentiary towns, situated in the marshes of the Arctic zone. Still, the term of his punishment was a short one. But at its expiration in 1886 two more years were added to it after re-examination of his case. But it seems that the documents concerning Raspopin were either written in very good handwriting or put in a very conspicuous place, or offered some peculiar attraction, as certain problems in chess. The fact is that, after the expiration of his additional term in 1888, his case was re-examined once again, and another year was added to his term. This was a small addition, a mere trifle, according to the gendarmes' views; but Raspopin seems not to have duly appreciated their leniency, for he died in Beresov a few months later from scurvy, which he had contracted there.

Bogorodzky, the son of the commander of the fortress of SS. Peter and Paul, who was exiled in 1883 to Tunka for his revolutionary sympathies; Martynov, a well-known physician; Ivanchin Pisarev, a journalist, and a score of others, have been made the victims of this exercise of the gendarmes' wits—receiving unexpectedly and unwarrantably, some one, two, some others three or more additional years of punishment, just when they were packing their

things for the journey home. A cruel joke, telling not only upon its victims, but upon the whole mass of exiles; adding to that sense of the absolute insecurity of the future, which is one of the most grievous aspects of the life of exiles.

XII.

THE EXILE TO THE ARCTIC ZONE.

IN the regulations referring to the exile system there is no restriction as to the place to which the administration can send a man, woman, or child whom they consider a danger to the security of the Tzar. But it was originally taken for granted that the place of exile should be more or less habitable for civilized beings. Taking into account the circumstances under which this penalty was inflicted, it cannot be said that such a restriction erred on the side of leniency. But under Alexander III. it was entirely thrown aside, and the practice of exiling people to places utterly unfit for human habitation was introduced on a large scale. This has made exile sometimes a heavier penalty than penal servitude in the Siberian mines.

Siberia is a vast country, with many climates, many gaols, many towns, which are all places of punishment.

The climate of Southern Siberia is as good as that of Central Russia, even better sometimes. The towns of Irkutsk, Tobolsk, Krasnoyarsk, and several others, resemble in all respects

ordinary provincial towns of European Russia. The Siberian people are a clever, industrious race, who never have known serfdom, and are now rapidly growing in education and prosperity. The thirst for knowledge is pervading all the well-to-do classes; and such is the scarcity of people who have received a good education that a professional man of any kind is sure to find a permanent and remunerative employment.

The exiles are mostly well educated men and women, often professional people. They could easily make a living in the larger towns, and protect themselves from want even in the smaller ones, numbering only a few thousand inhabitants. But here we stumble against the monstrous ministerial regulation of March, 1881, forbidding the political exiles to give lessons, to practise as doctors, advocates, lawyers, photographers, printers, librarians, booksellers, &c.,—indeed, to do anything which is likely to bring them in contact with the surrounding population.

But this regulation is not always rigorously enforced. The earnings of wives who have voluntarily followed their exiled husbands, and are not subjected to these restrictions; the money received by some of the well-to-do exiles from their relatives at home; and, above all, the spirit of fellowship prevailing among the exiles, who live generally in small communes of three, five, or more persons, rich and poor together, sharing all in a truly fraternal way—all this accounts for the fact that in the larger towns the exiles suffer no very great material want. Here they have to bear moral sufferings due to their

absolute dependence upon the caprice of a brutal, ignorant administration, which intercepts their private letters, seizes books, makes domiciliary searches at any time of day and night, deprives them whenever it chooses of their means of livelihood, and re-exiles them to worse places at will. The collisions between the exiles and the administration, of which we hear now and then, are all due to these causes.

The system of administrative exile is one of the heaviest charges against our Government. The incalculable harm done to Russia by its practice on so vast a scale, consists in the intellectual stultification of thousands of really well-intentioned, honest, and patriotic men and women, whose services would be invaluable to the country.

George Kennan has described to the indignant world our exile system as a whole. I will not retrace his steps in speaking of that national calamity of ours. My object is to say a few words about the exile into the Far North not visited by Kennan, where the exiles have to undergo not merely complete intellectual isolation, but a series of most cruel physical and material sufferings, which make that form of arbitrary punishment just as heavy as, if not heavier than, the hard labour in the mines.

Let me tell the reader the story of one of the early settlers in that inhospitable region, a certain Zalessky, a land surveyor in the province of Kursk. In 1877 he was arrested on the charge of having distributed a few Socialist pamphlets, and exiled without trial to Verkoyansk, a village at a latitude of 67° 34′, number-

ing 290 inhabitants, wretchedly poor, and completely savage. In that awful place, where he was at that time the only educated man, Zalessky remained *for full eight years*, without a book, without a newspaper, without a letter, suffering from the terrible Arctic cold, from hunger, and want. It was not the cruelty of the gendarmes which inflicted so dire a punishment for so trifling an offence, it was their carelessness. Zalessky was simply *forgotten* by them. When, by mere accident, his existence was discovered, an order was sent to Siberia to bring him back to his native country. As he had no money to make the journey at his own expense, he had to travel right across Siberia on foot, under escort, with a batch of vagabonds sent to their native villages in European Russia. It took him a year to come to the Moscow central prison, which he reached in 1886: there he was met by a number of political exiles on their way to Siberia. One of them, who escaped afterwards, told me that the appearance of Zalessky was that of a man who had spent twenty years in a gloomy dungeon. Though under forty, he looked like an old decrepit man, with bent and shattered body, blinking, almost sightless eyes, toothless mouth.

It is not only the climate which works such havoc with a man's frame, but the life of utter misery and isolation. Whenever an exile is sent to a new place, where he is quite alone, his fate is always extremely hard. Here is another example of more recent date. In 1884 Jordan, a student of the Kharkov Veterinary Schools, was arrested for having taken part in the print-

ing of the pamphlets of the *peaceful* Socialists—those who were against political terrorism. After a year of imprisonment, namely in 1885, he was exiled without trial to Verkolensk (not Verkhoyansk), a town in Southern Siberia. On reaching this place he wrote to his friends at Kharkov asking them to send him at his own address all the new things issued by the secret press, saying that the local police superintendent was a good man, who did not open the letters of the exiles. This letter was intercepted by the Kharkov police, and Jordan was sent off to the Arctic zone to Vilusk, lat. 63° 45′, where he had to live quite alone among the savage Yakuts. The sufferings and privations he had to undergo were such that he died there in 1888.

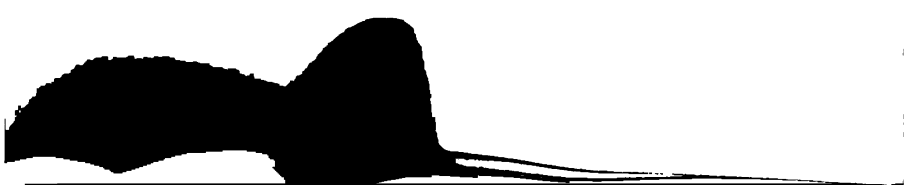
The case of Miss Lidia Ananyn, a young delicate girl of sixteen, who had nothing to do with revolutions, is also a very hard one, though it did not end so tragically. Her story shows the proceedings of the Russian police when the "highest of all," which means the Tzar, is personally concerned.

In March, 1887, there was an unsuccessful attempt against the life of the present Tzar, which was not exactly an attempt, because the conspirators were arrested beforehand. One of them, Novorussky, executed afterwards, lodged in the house of Mrs. Ananyn, a widow of forty-two, with two children—a girl, Lidia, and a boy, Nicolas, to whom Novorussky gave lessons. It was proved that Novorussky made bombs in his room with a fellow-conspirator; but there was no evidence whatever that his landlady knew or suspected anything about it. Indeed,

she did not, having her business as midwife of the Municipal Hospital to attend to. Yet she was sentenced by the military tribunal to hard labour and sent to Kara. Her son, a boy of thirteen, because he was a pupil of so dangerous a man as Novorussky, was exiled to the Caucasus. The daughter, Lidia, simply because she was three years older, met with a heavier punishment. She was exiled to the village Kandinsky, near Beresov, a horrible place, lat. 67°, where she was thrown quite alone among the savages. She petitioned to be sent to Kara, to be near her mother; but this was refused. She petitioned that her brother exiled to the Caucasus should be allowed to join her. But this was refused too. She was quite alone, suffering from cold, hunger, and all kinds of privations, which, in a little more than a year, brought her to the verge of death. She would have certainly died if by chance another exile, an energetic man with a large family, had not been sent to join her.

When the number of exiles increases, they mutually help each other morally and materially, so as to make the life more tolerable even in places so cursed by nature as Verkhoyansk, Sredne Kolymsk, and Vilusk. Still the sufferings and privations to which they are permanently subjected are extremely severe. These are uninhabitable places, for Europeans at all events. Nova Zemla, which is visited by men only during the summer months, has a much milder climate than the Arctic region of Siberia. In the former the average temperature for a year is 13° F., with 7° below zero for the three

winter months, whilst in Verkhoyansk the average both for the winter and autumn months is 31° F. below zero, the average temperature for the three months of eternal night, December, January and February, sinking to 53° F. below zero, which is full 13° below the freezing point of mercury. As to the average temperature for the year, it is only 1° F. above zero, the lowest temperature that has been observed at any point of the northern hemisphere. During the short summer the temperature rises, rapidly reaching 56° F. But with the warm season come the mosquitoes, which are a plague of these regions more difficult to endure than cold. "I never would have believed," says the correspondent of the *Russky Vedomosty* (Moscow), who has been exiled to these parts, "that the insects could appear in such swarms. They literally darken the light, filling the air with an incessant noise, covering, as with a dark mantle, our horses, whose flanks were soon bleeding all over. Maddened with pain, the horses kicked and reared, but seeing that all was unavailing, they drooped their heads and submitted to the inevitable. In vain we tried to protect ourselves with veils, travelling, notwithstanding the hot weather, in winter gloves and overcoats. The mosquitoes penetrated through the sleeves under the shirts, stinging the breast and the body, which ached as if burned with fire. The more we struggled to get rid of our tormentors, the more we opened the way to new thousands of them. On arriving at the huts of the Yakuts we kindled a great fire, which made such a smoke that it pricked the eyes and choked the



breath, though we lay stretched on the earthen floor. The mosquitoes disappeared, but as soon as the smoke dispersed a little, new swarms penetrated into the hut, covering all of us thickly." Such is nature in these regions. Now, what are the inhabitants, and their means of protecting themselves from its rigour?

We will quote from the same authority a few lines describing the largest of these northern settlements, Sredne Kolymsk, a "town" numbering fully 560 inhabitants. Most of them are of Russian extraction; but being for many generations isolated from all the world, and feeding exclusively on fish, they have lost the energy, industry, and versatility of Russian peasants. They are apathetic, lazy, and dull. It is considered a great sign of cleverness in a boy if he succeeds in learning to read and write in the course of eight to nine years. They know no trade, no industry, except fishing and occasionally hunting. The houses they live in can hardly be called houses, for they are badly-fitting wooden sheds *with no chimneys*, because the inhabitants do not know the use of bricks. The houses are warmed with a fire lit in the middle upon the earthen floor, the smoke passing out through a big hole in the pointed roof. It is not surprising that such houses during the winter are "infernally cold," to use the expression of our author.

Nothing grows, nothing can be got in these regions. Everything is imported from enormous distances, and is, therefore, exceedingly dear. Bread is sold at famine prices. Candles, soap, cotton wares, matches, are fabulously dear.

"In such conditions of the market," philosophically observes our author, "one has naturally to give up bread, sugar, and the many other commodities we are accustomed to consider as indispensable to a civilized man. But fish, reindeer meat, fat, and wood for burning can be obtained."

It is hardly necessary to say that there is nothing in a place like that to satisfy the intellectual cravings of a civilized man, which have also to be "given up" as a matter of course. Suffice it to mention that the letters from Russia take *six months* to come to Sredne Kolymsk. Thus the news received, and the papers—supposing the exiles have money to spare for subscribing to any—are always six months old, and the post comes only three times a year.

There is little difference between the three Arctic towns to which exiles are sent. If anything, Sredne Kolymsk is the best of them, numbering a population equal to that of the two others put together, and comparatively better off. Of Vilusk we read that its inhabitants are so poor that they gave up keeping dogs, being unable to feed them.

Now let us see for what crimes scores of young, intelligent, well-educated people are exiled to these horrible places. First of all, it must be remembered that—with a few exceptions we will mention later on—they are all administrative exiles, people who have never been tried at all, and never convicted of any offence. They have been exiled by order of the police, on suspicion that they held dangerous *opinions*, and are likely some day to commit some offence. What

grounds for a similar suspicion are considered sufficient by the Russian Government for exiling people to such awful places we shall see best by a few examples. We take them all from one place, Sredne Kolymsk, in order to be nearer the average.

Let us begin with Isaac Sklovsky, a journalist of Jewist extraction. He was a man of position—the editor of the *Elisavergrad Leaflet*, a popular provincial paper. The charge against him is this: having made the acquaintance of an Odessa revolutionist named Dudin, who afterwards turned informer, he purchased from him two pamphlets, issued by the secret printing office, for the sum of thirty kopecks, which makes about 8*d*. in English coin. When a domiciliary search was made at Sklovsky's house, the pamphlets were *not* found. But he did not deny having purchased them, and refused to disclose what he had done with them. For this offence he was kept in prison about a year, and then released on bail at the beginning of 1885, pending the resolution upon his case. In the summer of 1886 the resolution came, and he was arrested again and marched off straight to Eastern Siberia for five years. *Because a Jew* he was sent to Sredne Kolymsk.

The case of another young Jew, Liadoff, of Riga, is still more remarkable. The reader may remember that some time ago some notice was taken by the English press of the arrest at Riga of a German sailor who brought upon an English ship a parcel of revolutionary prints. It was this fact that brought poor Liadoff into trouble. He had a prosperous business

in Riga, and never thought of politics or revolution, when, one fine morning, he received from an unknown gentleman (the German sailor) a note requesting him to come on board a certain ship then in Riga harbour. Prompted by curiosity, Liadoff came and asked for the sailor. When they were alone the latter told him that he was in great difficulty: he had a parcel of revolutionary pamphlets entrusted to him by a Geneva friend, but could not find the person to whom they had to be delivered at Riga. Not knowing what to do with his dangerous parcel, he wanted to know whether Liadoff would not be good enough to take care of it. Naturally, Liadoff declined, energetically saying that he had nothing to do with revolution, and expressed his amazement how the idea of applying to him could have entered the sailor's head. The latter apologized, and explained that he got Liadoff's name from his Geneva friend, who happened to have been Liadoff's schoolfellow, and thought he might be tried if he was still in Riga. The affair did not go farther. Liadoff went home without having taken one copy of the pamphlets. But when the sailor was arrested, Liadoff's visit on board the ship was discovered by the detectives, and he had to answer for it to the police. He explained candidly how the thing passed, and was released. This took place in October, 1884. Soon after he married, and was enjoying his honeymoon, when, in January, 1887, whilst he was at dinner with his young wife, a messenger came from the colonel of gendarmerie, asking him to come immediately to his office.

Liadoff was on good terms with the colonel. The office was in the same street, a few blocks off. Nothing suspecting, he left the table immediately—"just between the second course and the pudding," as he said afterwards to his companions—and went to the colonel. Here he was told that, according to a telegram from St. Petersburg, he was to be sent off to Oriental Siberia by the next train, which meant in two hours' time. It is easy to imagine the poor man's consternation. To his vehement protests and inquiries the colonel answered that he was himself exceedingly surprised at such an order, for which he was quite unable to find any plausible explanation. Liadoff begged for a respite, suggesting that there must be some error or misunderstanding. The colonel said that the order was a peremptory one, but he would grant a respite if the governor of the province authorized it. The governor, who also knew Liadoff, was applied to, and fully entered into his position. He telegraphed to St. Petersburg, vouching for Liadoff's innocence, and asking whether it was not somebody else who had to be sent to Oriental Siberia. The result was an angry telegram from St. Petersburg saying that they "do not make mistakes," and reprimanding the governor for having delayed the execution of the order. Thus, after a respite of two days only, Liadoff was marched off to Oriental Siberia. *As a Jew* he was also sent to Sredne Kolymsk.

The case of two boys sent to the same dreadful place, Landa and Gornstein, also Jews —who, when arrested, were the first fifteen,

the second sixteen years of age—is more shocking still. They were both studying in the Odessa gymnasium, when, in the beginning of August, 1885, a certain Fedorsher arrived in the town from Geneva. He had been slightly compromised in some early propaganda business before he left Russia, so that on returning he had to be careful to keep out of the reach of the police. As the latter got wind of his arrival in Odessa he had to hide himself for some time in the houses of his friends, as is often the case with "illegal" people. One of these friends, being not sure that his own house was not watched by the police, had the unfortunate idea of taking Fedorsher one night to the lodgings of the two boys, who were his relatives, as the safest refuge. Of course the boys asked no questions, and were satisfied with the explanation that their guest wanted simply a lodging for a night or two to avoid the expense of an hotel. Nobody thought of the possibility of the police coming to seek Fedorsher in the house of these children. But the police came on account of the boys themselves. It was rumoured that in their gymnasium some sort of propaganda was afloat, and in one night 120 domiciliary visits were made to the houses of different pupils in order to discover some material proof of it. One of these visits fell to the lot of Landa and Gornstein. When the police arrived, the inmates were not yet in bed, and Fedorsher, on being asked who he was, explained that he was their neighbour, living a few blocks off. They believed him, and he played the part he

assumed so well that the police let him go. But when his little portmanteau, which he had to leave behind, was opened, a parcel of revolutionary publications was discovered in it. This was sufficient for the arrest of the two boys, though it was clearly proved that they knew nothing about it. They were kept in the Odessa prison, one of the worst in the empire, in solitary confinement, for about a year and a half, and then the police, without any trial, pronounced upon them the verdict of five years' exile to Oriental Siberia, as people dangerous to the existing order and implicated in revolutionary agitation. When the monstrous sentence was read to them the younger of the boys, Landa, exclaimed: "How? Am I also a revolutionist, a man dangerous to the authorities?"

At this the gendarme smiled, and answered in these very words: "No, certainly you are not. But you may become so some day."

I must not leave the reader under the impression that Jews alone are honoured in Russia with this dreadful form of punishment. There are several born Russians among the exiles of Sredne Kolymsk, but they have all somewhat heavier charges against them. One of them, Belousoff, was tried by an exceptional tribunal, it is true, but still tried, and condemned to exile for life in these gloomy regions for a distant connection with a dynamite manufacturing business; another, Victor Daniloff, though never tried, was involved in active revolutionary propaganda among the dissenting sects; the third had escaped once from Southern Siberia;

the fourth was for several years the special correspondent and representative of a revolutionary paper. All these are small offences as compared with the punishment, but they are actual crimes when compared with the ridiculous charges against the Jews who share the same fate.

The anti-Semitic agitation we have seen in Germany and Austria is as absurd and ridiculous as would be the revival of some exploded superstition. But in Russia we see something worse. Here, in consequence of the personal bias of the Tzar, Alexander III., who was a fierce Jew hater, a special measure was passed in 1886, making one section of citizens liable to heavier punishments than others for the same offences, simply because they are of a certain race and creed. Is it not a crying injustice, a flagrant and cynical violation of the fundamental laws of all modern States, Russia included, where the equality of all the citizens before the Tzar or his representatives stands in the written code? We need not multiply our illustrations. The cases of Belousoff, Daniloff, and Miss Shmidova, a young girl of Jewish extraction, whose only offence is that she was the sweetheart of Ulianoff, the would-be Tzaricide, present the maximum of guilt; the cases of Liadoff and the two boys we have just spoken of, the minimum. All the rest of the thirty exiles in Sredne Kolymsk stand between.

The exiles of Verkho Yansk are in the same position as those of Sredne Kolymsk—the same offences, or rather absence of offences, the same conditions of life. We will record here only

two men, who have suffered there for many years, and will probably find there their icy graves, Porfiry Voinaralsky and Sergius Kovalik. They are now both about forty-five, and must be by this time utterly broken, decrepit old men. Both were justices before being arrested: Voinaralsky in the province of Penza; Kovalik in Orel. In 1873, at the epoch of the enthusiastic crusade of educated people "among the peasants," they abandoned their magisterial chairs, and as simple manual labourers went among the people to preach Socialism. They were arrested very soon—in July, 1874. Since that time, for sixteen years, the Government has been tormenting these two men with a mean and implacable cruelty, simply because they have shown more devotion to the cause, more energy, and have won a greater popularity than the rest. They were dragged from prison to prison; from the fortress of Peter and Paul to the house of horrors, the Kharkoff central prison; then to Kara, where they were arbitrarily kept after the term of their legal punishment had elapsed. And when they ought to have been set free to settle in some Siberian town, like many of their companions, they were exiled to Verkho Yansk, where, up to 1885, they remained alone with Zalessky, mentioned above, suffering the same horrible privations which have broken the latter. And all this life of martyrdom for a few words about Socialism!

The Government of Alexander III. showed, after 1886, a decided inclination to multiply and extend the practice of administrative exile to the Arctic zone. The towns of Sredne Kolymsk

and Verkho Yansk have been populated, as we have said, within the last three years. In Vilusk, a town at the same latitude, a special prison has been constructed for the unfortunate survivors of the Yakutsk massacres of 1889—a fact which is unique in the history of penitentiary institutions. It is reported that a project is afloat of instituting a new penal colony at Bykoff promontory, which is still farther advanced in the region of eternal ice. Thus the Russian Government has created for its political suspects a sort of combination of Dante's *antenora*, described in Canto XXXII. of the *Inferno*, where the sinners are tormented by being immersed in solid ice, with the first *girone* described in Canto III., where the damned are tormented by mosquitoes and wasps.

Every government pretending to be a civilized one is morally bound to respect certain general principles of justice and equity; just as a man admitted into respectable society is bound to conform to certain rules of common decency.

The Russian Government has grossly outraged them. I need not dwell upon the difference in the treatment of Jews and Christians, which is a monstrosity. I will only ask whether the foundation of penitentiary colonies of any kind in the Arctic zone is not a monstrosity as well. Imprisonments are intended as deprivation of freedom and nothing more. Exile is intended as a limitation of the freedom of movement. To aggravate these punishments purposely by physical sufferings so intense as those caused by the Arctic climate is to reintroduce torture under another form.

I cannot leave this painful subject without drawing the attention of all humanitarian people to another shocking trait of the Siberian exile system: the treatment of men who are undoubtedly insane. Insanity is not rare among political prisoners, thanks to the whole system of our solitary confinement. Sometimes the insane are sent to the asylums, or consigned to the care of their relatives; but sometimes they are not; and we know positively of several men, undoubtedly insane, who are kept in the worst places of exile, marched with the parties of other prisoners by *étapes*, and treated as if they were as responsible as people who are right in their minds.

A certain Edelson was exiled in 1887 to Verkho Yansk, although he was undoubtedly insane. He was arrested at the close of 1885 in Minsk on the charge of participation in an unsuccessful attempt to found a secret printing office. At the preliminary interrogation, at which in Russia a prisoner is bound to answer, and which in case of political offences is conducted in the truly Jesuitic and inquisitorial manner, Edelson had the misfortune of falling into one of the traps laid for him by the gendarmes. He committed some indiscretion, making statements to the prejudice of his companions. The pain he felt at the discovery of his error was so keen that he lost his reason a few months after his imprisonment. This did not prevent the police from exiling him to the Arctic zone. He was marched in company with twenty other political prisoners and four hundred common convicts across Siberia, causing

his companions endless trouble and worry. His fixed idea was that they were conspiring to kill him, though they treated him very kindly, and have forgiven him long ago his involuntary offence so heavily expiated. Every now and then in the dead of the night he would terrify them all with wild howlings and cries, asking for the officer of the escort or the director of the prison, imploring them to protect him and separate him from his companions. So they reached Irkutsk. Here the political exiles petitioned that Edelson should be tranferred to the Irkutsk lunatic asylum. The local authorities supported that petition, telegraphing to St. Petersburg that Edelson was really insane. But no reply came, and Edelson was marched off to Verkho Yansk. How the other exiles managed with him there, God alone knows.

This is no exception. Almost in every batch of exiles marching to Siberia there are men in a similar condition. With the party that left Moscow central prison in May, 1887, there were two men undoubtedly insane. One was Tikhon Lebedeff, the scion of a wealthy family, and a well-educated man. After having completed his studies in the gymnasium, instead of going to the university, he became a common workman, and took an active part in organizing the "Workmen's League" of Southern Russia. In 1881 he was arrested at Kieff on suspicion, and confined in Nijni Novgorod. He escaped very soon, and resumed his favourite propagandist work among the workmen in Odessa, Kieff, and St. Petersburg. He was arrested in the latter town in the summer of 1884, and imprisoned in

the fortress of Peter and Paul. Here he became raving mad, and was transferred to the Kazan lunatic asylum, where there is a special ward provided for politicals. He recovered his reason, and was again immured in the fortress of Peter and Paul. After five months' imprisonment he was a madman again, and was the second time transferred to the Kazan asylum. In May, 1887, in a period of comparative lucidity, he was joined to the batch of exiles on their march to Siberia. But before they reached Krasnoyarsk Lebedeff again became insane, and in such a state, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his companions and the certificates of the physicians, was marched to Tunka.

Another insane man in the same party was Mavrogan, a well-known author of books on education, and formerly tutor in the Richelieu Gymnasium in Odessa. He was arrested for the first time in 1879, during General Todleben's furious reign, and without any trial, without interrogation, without explanation of the motives of his arrest, was exiled to Oriental Siberia for five years. After the expiration of this term he returned to Odessa, and a few months later he was arrested again. The charge against him was this: The spies had discovered that he had met one day in the public garden a noted revolutionist, and had a talk with him. The spies could not overhear what they were talking about, for they had to watch them at a distance; but this was deemed sufficient for arresting Mavrogan and keeping him in solitary confinement for more than a year until he lost his reason. In 1886 he was transferred to the

Odessa lunatic asylum for examination. Here the well-known specialist for mental diseases, Dr. Chazky, and all his assistants, testified to his insanity. This did not prevent the police from sentencing him to four years' exile in Oriental Siberia, which order was read to Mavrogan *in the lunatic asylum* in July, 1886, by a police officer. Notwithstanding the efforts of his mother and sister, and of the medical staff of the asylum, the order was carried out. Mavrogan was transferred to the Moscow central prison, and in May, 1887, marched off to his destination.

Another similar case we will mention is that of Dobroselsky, a Pole by birth. He was arrested in Warsaw in connection with Socialist propaganda and secret printing. He lost his reason a few months after his arrest, but was, nevertheless, exiled in 1887 to Kurgan, in Western Siberia. The remarkable fact about him is that whilst sending him to his destination the authorities addressed a special request to the other exiles of Kurgan asking them to take care of their new companion *because he was insane.*

XIII.

SIBERIAN HORRORS — THE YAKUTSK MASSACRES AND THE KARA TRAGEDY.

ONE of the most terrible tragedies of the last two reigns—the massacre of Yakutsk—took place in connection with the practice of exiling people to the regions of Polar night. This terrible affair did not pass unnoticed and unknown, like most of the dark deeds of the Russian autocracy. Thanks to the London *Times*, it made the round of the world, marking an epoch in the story of the gradual winning over of the public opinion of England to the cause of Russian freedom.

Since that time we have received many authentic documents, explaining much that was dark and incomprehensible in the whole affair, and showing the butchery in a somewhat new light. I leave to the reader to decide whether it is a better one or worse.

At the beginning of April, 1889, thirty political exiles were waiting at Yakutsk to be transported to some locality in the extreme east of Siberia, where they were ordered to reside. These prisoners, it must be noted, were exiled by "administrative order"—that is to say, they

had not been tried and convicted by any tribunal; no conclusive evidence had been adduced against them. Legally speaking, they were citizens who retained all their rights, and against whom no conviction or penalty had been inflicted. The Government—not the law, but the Government—for purely administrative reasons, had ordered these persons to live in exile. This is the way suspects against whom no evidence is forthcoming are often treated. The thirty prisoners, to reach Yakutsk, had already performed a painful and exhausting journey, lasting a whole year, and made mostly on foot by *étapes*. But to reach the further stations, such as Verkhoyansk and Kolymsk, greater hardships are in store. Some 160 miles from Yakutsk, at Aldan, the last vestiges of civilization disappear. The road crosses an absolutely desert locality, where at best a few nomad tribes may be met, though these for the most part have been decimated by smallpox.

A political prisoner who had travelled from Yakutsk to Kolymsk related that on reaching a "jurta" or resting-hut, he had only found a man dead from smallpox, another dying, and no sort of provision whatever for travellers. The other members of the family living in the hut had all fled away. Yet these huts are the only habitations to be met with on the road. They are occupied by a sort of postmaster, whose mission it is to keep open the means of communication, and who has become the only existing connexion between the Government and the natives, the latter being for the most part semi-savages. These postmasters lead a wretched life, together

with their families and their cattle. The best that a "jurta" can offer to the traveller is a little shelter and a little warmth. As for food, that is altogether out of the question, and the traveller must carry his own provisions with him, or he will die of hunger. It is only on reaching Verkhoiansk that articles of primary necessity can be bought, and then at fabulous prices. But to understand better what was about to occur, it is necessary to explain further that the post-stations are at very great distances from each other. There is nothing between them but the wastes of the Polar deserts. Such distances cannot be accomplished on foot; horses drawing carriages would die of hunger, and deer alone can stand the journey. As the distance from posthouse to posthouse varies from 150 to 200 miles, there are intermediary halting-places, called "povarny," where the deer can take breath and eat their rations of moss. But for men there is no accommodation, no warmth, no shelter; no possibility of getting food anywhere. The number of deer the post-masters are by their contracts obliged to keep is calculated with a view to carrying the post once every three months, and conveying an occasional traveller. It is, therefore, quite insufficient for somewhat numerous parties; and when the deer are gone, the traveller must stop at the station or at the "povarny" and wait, sometimes for weeks, until the exhausted animals come back and are ready for use. The journey from Yakutsk to Sredne Kolymsk takes about three months, and the travellers, besides warm clothes, must have provisions for all this

time, like a crew sailing for a three months' journey in the Arctic seas.

Up to the spring of 1889 the authorities at Yakutsk thought it was only right to show some leniency to the exiles under "administrative order," who were told off to the Arctic zone. They argued, and justly, that, as these latter had not been condemned to death, it was necessary to take some measures to prevent their dying of starvation on the road; therefore, to prevent the overcrowding of the post-stations, only small batches of prisoners were despatched at a time, and these at intervals of ten to fifteen days from each other. Further, to enable the prisoners to procure food for the journey, and the indispensable articles of clothing, the allowance made for the journey was paid to them ten days in advance. But as the prisoners have also to feed the Cossacks of their escort, their own allowance was not sufficient, and an advance was made to them from their monthly pay, about 10*l.* in all. These were not very great concessions, and did not prevent the occasional death from cold of several children. Cases of illness among the adults were very frequent, and some of them never recovered from the effects of the terrible journey. But all this is quite within the ordinary programme of a Russian exile's life, and they accepted all these sufferings quietly as a matter of course. Something especially ferocious and unusual must occur before protests are raised. This is precisely what happened in Yakutsk in the spring of 1889.

General Svetlizky, who, like a sensible man,

had established the above-mentioned rules for the transport of the exiles to the Polar regions, sent in his resignation of the governorship. In March of 1889 Colonel Ostashkin was appointed to fill the vacant post *ad interim*. Immediately on assuming the office of governor he thought fit to alter all the rules or customs relating to the transport of exiles under "administrative order." He decided that four instead of two prisoners should start at once, which, with the escort, made eight persons, and this at short intervals of only seven days. The money allowance for the journey was to be paid only the day before the departure, and the advance of money on the exiles' pay suppressed altogether. Further, the exiles were all to surrender themselves at the prison the day before starting, so that it would be absolutely impossible for them to make the purchases indispensable for such a journey. Finally, they were forbidden to take with them more than 200 pounds of luggage and provisions per head.

What induced Ostashkin to take such a step? In one of the letters from the exiles, these wanton cruelties are attributed to the fact that his sister was compromised in some revolutionary affair and was an exile in Siberia. Ostashkin wanted to make amends, and show his loyalty, by a particular severity towards the political exiles. In other letters from the same source, a more lenient view is taken of Ostashkin, who is represented as a typical, narrow-minded, ignorant bureaucrat, having an implicit faith in stamped paper, and sticking to the letter of the regulations, being unable to under-

stand or believe that they are not the perfection of human wisdom, and must be sometimes adapted to circumstances. It was prescribed, as a general rule, for exiles settled in towns, that their different allowances should be given to them at the end of the month, which could not cause serious inconvenience even to the poorest among exiles, as they could find credit for one month. The regulation prescribed, moreover, that the exiles travelling by *étapes* should not carry with them more than 200 pounds of luggage. It was not much, but there was no reason to complain, as the ordinary exiles had not to take with them any article of food, except some tea and sugar and the like. It was sheer madness to enforce such rules upon the exiles who had to embark upon a three months' journey across the icy deserts of northern Siberia. For himself and the Cossack escorting him, each exile had to take at least 480 pounds of bread alone. But men cannot stand the Arctic cold and the fatigue of such a journey on bread only. The exiles had to take with them about 200 pounds of meat, 50 pounds of butter, 20 pounds of salt—to say nothing of tobacco, tea, sugar, biscuits, etc. Besides articles of food, the exiles had 200 pounds of personal luggage: wearing apparel, linen, books, etc., which the regulations allowed them to bring with them from European Russia. How could they possibly reduce their luggage to the regulation 200 pounds? Besides, special fur coats able to stand the awful frost of 70 degrees below zero (Fahr.), are as imperatively necessary as food. In the warmest fur coat that is worn

in European Russia a man would get frozen the first day of his journey.

Now Ostashkin's rules meant that the exiles should be exposed wholly unprotected both to hunger and cold.

Of course, Ostashkin did not really want to have them all frozen and starved. It was mere bureaucratic stupidity and ignorance; but this did not make the situation less dangerous. Obstinacy, official pride, which does not allow the admission of an error, and considers any expostulation as an act of insubordination, almost a personal offence—these are qualities as characteristic of our bureaucracy as ignorance and stupidity. Governor Ostashkin proved that he had the arrogance and susceptibility of all petty bureaucratic despots. To these he added cowardice all his own, which alone accounts for his mean and treacherous conduct in the later stages of this dreadful affair.

The thirty Yakutsk exiles had every reason for being alarmed at what they called the March edicts, and for taking some steps to protect themselves, their wives, sisters, and children. They received unexpected assistance on the part of the ispravnik (chief) of the district of Kolymsk, who reported to the governor that a severe epidemic of smallpox was ravaging the district through which the exiles had to travel, that many of the Yakuts holding the post stations had fallen victims to it, and that at some of them one could not put up without danger of infection.

On the 16th of March one of the exiles, Goz, went to see the governor, explaining to him

that the exiles did not mean to be disrespectful or insubordinate, but that the new regulations could not be carried out without most deplorable consequences, and that they hoped that he would reconsider his decision. Ostashkin seemed impressed and even moved. "I am also a man," he said, and he promised to give his full attention to the matter. In fact, he did so. On the next day, the 17th of March, Governor Ostashkin issued several orders to the ispravnik of the district, enjoining upon him that all objects likely to cause contagion should be removed from the post stations, and that a sufficient number of relay horses and reindeers should be kept there to allow the exiles to travel without danger to their health or delay. To his bureaucratic mind to issue such an order meant to remove all difficulties. He might as well have ordered the ispravnik to have the whole road macadamised in the course of a fortnight, and bridges thrown over all the rivers, and viaducts over the ravines. These orders could have been executed by the ispravnik if he had had a magic wand to command the services of spirits. Otherwise both were equally impracticable.

The exiles knew it very well, and the orders of March 17th produced upon them the most depressing effect: nothing would be done for them, and the governor was evidently resolved to stick to his regulation. The first batch of four exiles received an order to surrender themselves to the prison authorities on the 22nd, before starting for their journey to Sredne Kolymsk, which under the circumstances was likely to be their last in this world. Exasperated at

such senseless, unaccountable cruelty, the exiles assembled in the house of Notkin to discuss what was to be done in their desperate situation. Here some of the most resolute among the exiles proposed that rather than go submissively to a certain death, they would refuse to start at all, and would defend themselves arms in hand, and be killed on the spot.

We have the letter of Sophia Gurevich, written to their friends after the catastrophe, to prove that such a suggestion was made by some of the exiles. There is also an allusion to it in a letter of the widow of Hausmann. The suggestion was not accepted—a formal petition to the governor on the part of all the exiles was agreed upon. On March 21st all the thirty exiles lodged in proper quarters their petitions, couched in perfectly respectful terms.

Had the suggestions of despair been accepted and carried out the exiles would have been justified in offering resistance to a flagrant abuse of power. Only soldiers are bound to obey the orders of their superiors, even when disastrous. But if a warder or a director of a prison were to order a prisoner to do something which would infallibly lead to a fatal result, the prisoner would be justified in disobeying the order, and in resisting it, if compelled to, by force. And the exiles were not prisoners, but citizens who had not been deprived of their rights. I do not think that any English or American tribunal would hesitate in pronouncing upon their case.

But in Russia it is different; citizens have not that right of resisting the illegal actions of the administration, which is the foundation of all

free constitutions. Two courses were therefore open to Governor Ostashkin, when he got wind of the suggestions made by the exiles. If he regarded them seriously, he might at once arrest the people who had supported them, and those who had heard them, and institute an inquiry. Or he might let events take their natural course, and wait until it was clear whether the exiles really meant to defend themselves or not. A handful of young men and girls could not imperil the peace of a town, with several battalions of soldiers and Cossacks. But either from cowardice or from mean calculation, Governor Ostashkin adopted a course of treachery and deceit worthy of some black chief in Africa. He deliberately laid a trap for the exiles, tranquillizing them in order to have them unprepared, and then sent armed soldiers to butcher them.

In the documents which are in our hands there is a letter from the commander of the Yakutsk Garrison, Colonel Vajev, to an intimate friend of his, in which he says that on March 21st he was summoned to the governor, who ordered him to keep his soldiers in readiness to support the police on the next day. So the use of force against the exiles was already resolved upon by Ostashkin on the 21st. Yet on this very day the chief of the Yakutsk police, Sukhachev, went to the exiles as a messenger of peace. He saw them in the morning, soon after the petitions were delivered, and then again in the evening by appointment, and he told them that *the Governor revoked, pro tem., the new regulations*, and would consider the

matter carefully, and give his final resolution to-morrow morning. The chief of the police mentioned that Governor Ostashkin was very much vexed to hear that the exiles had been in a body to the offices of the police to present their petitions. This was considered too much like a political demonstration; and to prevent the recurrence of any such manifestation the exiles were told to assemble again the following day in the house of Notkin, where they would receive a definite answer. The explanation was plausible and quite in keeping with the habits of Russian officialdom. The exiles were taken in. The military ruse of Governor Ostashkin was successful; his enemies were lulled into false security, and fell into his trap with light hearts. They came to Notkin's lodgings quite unprepared either for an armed attack or for any hostility on the part of the administration.

It must be mentioned that in these regions, infested by herds of wolves, the exiles, like all other citizens, are allowed to wear fire-arms. So they might have been well-equipped for the fight, if it had been intended. But, as a matter of fact, out of the thirty-five people assembled only five happened to have their revolvers in their pockets, one of which *was not loaded.* The revolver of Notkin, the master of the house, was found in the lumber room. Two of the exiles, Bramson and Hausmann, who were declared to be the ringleaders, had left their revolvers at their lodgings. The exiles were quite unarmed, which is the best proof, if proof were needed, that the assembly was a peaceable

one, and that nobody meditated offering "armed resistance." There were five visitors who, suspecting nothing, came to see their friends assembled in Notkin's house before the soldiers appeared.

And now the fatal hour arrived.

At ten o'clock in the morning, whilst the exiles were waiting for the governor's reply, a subaltern officer of the police, Olessov, came with an order to go in a body to the police, "to hear the governor's reply."

The exiles had no reason on earth to object to going once again to a place where they had been the day before. But they were naturally puzzled at the contradiction by the new order of that given to them yesterday by the chief of the police himself. They observed to Olessov that they had been especially advised by Colonel Sukhachev not to go in a body to the police office. But in reply to their observation Olessov thought it sufficient to merely repeat, "Then you are not going?" and without waiting for a reply he hastily withdrew, as one who has done all that was expected of him.

The exiles tried in vain to make him understand that they only wanted some explanation. At this juncture the troops arrived. It is an important point, upon which the account given both by the exiles and the officials are agreed, that the troops followed at the heels of the governor's messenger, and arrived a few minutes after him. This means that they were sent simultaneously with the messenger, before the reply of the exiles to his summons could be heard. It is therefore quite evident that there

was premeditation on the part of Governor Ostashkin, who *wanted* to use the troops.

This conclusion is fully corroborated by the documentary evidence of the above-quoted letter of Colonel Vajev, who says that: "On March 22nd, at *ten o'clock* in the morning, I went with my soldiers to the house of Monastyrev (occupied by Notkin), *broke down* the gates and the door, and entered the room where the exiles were assembled."

Upon what followed, we have several letters from the survivors of the massacres. One of them, a man whom we know, but whose name I cannot reveal, for he is still in Siberia, writes as follows:—

"When the house was surrounded by the troops, Karamzine (the officer in command) entered the house with a platoon of soldiers, and told us that he came to escort us to the police office. We answered that the appearance of the troops appeared to us very strange, that we assembled here by the order of the governor to wait for his reply, and did not know whom to obey. The officer answered that all this did not concern him, that he was obeying orders, and that the chief of the police who was present knew everything. Here Olessov (the chief of the police) exclaimed: 'Why do you waste time in talking? Do what you were ordered!' These words acted as a signal. The soldiers and officers became strangely excited, and Karamzine, without listening to us any longer, repeated three times: 'Will you go?' and paying no attention to the cries: 'Yes, yes, we will go! Give us time to dress!' (it was winter), he shouted to the soldiers: 'Take them!'

"Instantly the soldiers rushed upon us with butt ends of their guns and bayonets. Awful cries and groans filled the room. Our first row was knocked to the ground, and the next moment shots were fired on both sides. What followed immediately after I cannot say, because with the first discharge I was wounded and fell senseless to the ground. How long I lay I do not know: from what others told me afterwards, I gather that it must have been about three or four minutes. When I recovered my senses I heard no firing, and I saw that the room was empty. The platoon of soldiers had joined the troops outside, and our people rushed towards the back entrance. But it was guarded by the soldiers. The first who opened it, our dear and beloved comrade, Mukhanov, was received with a volley of balls and killed on the spot. All this happened before I recovered. When I came to my senses I felt at first no pain, but was on the contrary strangely excited, as if I were drunk. From the back room I heard the cries of distress from my companions and the groans of the wounded. I ran in that direction. But before I had gone many paces I saw the corpse of Sergius Pik, awfully mutilated, lying in a corner. He was hit by a ball in the forehead, but as if that were not enough, his lower jaw had been smashed with butt ends of guns. Horror-stricken at this sight, I rushed to another room and threw myself upon a sofa I found there. I was wounded myself. On the floor near the chimney was stretched Michael Gotz, who was severely wounded. In the corner lay Fundaminsky, wounded too, groaning pitiably

and writhing with pain. The other rooms were also filled with wounded. Their groans, the sight of pools of blood everywhere, the cries of anger and terror of those who were not yet hurt, all this threw my mind into a state of prostration and misery such as no words can describe. Gradually we began to come to our senses—those who were unhurt trying to do what they could for our wounded. But all this changed in one moment. On a sudden we heard a frightful noise of a volley, and then of another, and again another. The balls were pouring upon us from all sides. The soldiers fired at the doors, windows, and walls, which were too thin to protect us against their rifles. Our people were falling one by one on all sides. The desperate cries: 'We surrender! We surrender!' resounded through the house, but the infuriated soldiers went on firing, and it was long before the commander stopped them."

There is another letter upon the same subject, whose author can be named, because he is now out of the reach of the Russian Government. It is from Zotoff, one of the three men executed on the 7th of August, 1889:—

"The beginning of the affray, as far as I can remember the details, was as follows: I clearly recollect that, before commanding 'take them!' Karamzine approached his platoon standing at the door, and said something to them in a low voice. I suppose it was some instruction, because I did not hear him say any other words but 'take them!' Yet at these words the soldiers divided in two equal parts, and made two rapid flank movements, crushing

us on both sides so that we could not move. In the front row cries were heard, caused, I suppose, by the blows of the butt ends of the guns, whilst at the back some of my neighbours shouted: 'Withdraw the soldiers! we will go with the escort! give us time to put on our cloaks!' Karamzine, who was at that moment near the table, took no notice, and shouted once again to his soldiers: 'Take them!' Here something horrible occurred. The room was filled with awful heartrending cries, and several of our people fell to the ground, pierced with bayonets. I drew my revolver from my pocket, and shouted to the soldiers as loudly as I could to stop the butchery. But they did not think of heeding me. Several of them only pointed their rifles at me, and Karamzine pulled out his revolver, looking at me fixedly all the time.

"In a state of indescribable excitement I jumped upon the sofa, and levelled my revolver at Karamzine. I do not know whether he or I fired first. I cannot tell whether anyone had fired before me. I remember only that I fired and that there was firing on both sides; but it seems to me that all this happened simultaneously. Soon I was wounded and lost consciousness.

"When I came back to my senses, I found myself lying on the floor. I rose with difficulty, and saw that the soldiers had left the room. In a corner I perceived Pik, whose body rested against the wall, his head on his chest, a pool of blood by his side. On the floor, close by, there was a revolver. I thought he was wounded, and hastened to the next room to get some

water; but, altering my mind, returned to lay him down first on the sofa. When, however, I raised his head, I perceived he was dead. He had, above the left eye, a ghastly hole from which blood and brains oozed and fell on his chest. Profoundly upset by this horrible spectacle, I hurried to the next room. There, on all sides, on the ground and on the beds, I saw the wounded, who were groaning and praying for water. Some of our friends had gathered round and tried to help them. Some one having said that there was no water in the house, but some ice in the yard, I ran out to fetch some. In crossing the third room, I saw lying on the bed Sophia Gurevitch, who had been ripped open by the bayonets. One of our comrades was placing pieces of ice on the side of the enormous wound. Her face was deadly pale, and she could hardly speak. 'Zotoff,' she murmured, 'good-bye, I am dying. I am suffering horribly. In mercy give me some poison!' I felt as if I were going mad.'

The shots stopped, and the massacre seemed to be over. There was a lull for a while. Several of the exiles came out of the house asking for medical help for their wounded companions.

In the meanwhile the whole of the small town, attracted by the noise, was assembled at the gates of the besieged house. Governor Ostashkin came also. The wife of A. Hausmann tells in her letter that she came too, attracted by the sound of detonations :—

"My husband ran to me and told me that he was not hurt, but that Mukhanov was killed, and many were wounded; and he turned to the

governor saying that it was disgraceful to kill people for a dispute about such a trifle as the escort. The governor replied something like 'calm yourself.' But at this moment a shot was fired at the governor by one of the exiles who had left the house."

It was Zotoff, who came to fetch a doctor, and, seeing the governor, who was the real author of all these horrors, drew out his revolver and fired two shots.

If Ostashkin had been a man with an average share of courage and self-control, he would have ordered his men to apprehend his assailant, and the matter would have stopped there. But he behaved like a coward that he was: after the first shot he turned his back and fled through the open gate. Zotoff was able to reach the house almost unhurt, although he was cribbled with balls. The soldiers were left to do whatever they chose. Not a single shot was fired from the besieged house. But for about twenty minutes the soldiers kept it under concentrated fire, the balls of their rifles piercing the door, the wooden walls, the windows—hitting the exiles in every corner. Over five hundred shots were fired by the soldiers, as was proved by the judicial inquiry. Out of the thirty-five people assembled in the house, six were killed on the spot, nine were dangerously wounded, and thirteen disabled.

Was it what Governor Ostashkin wanted? Probably it was more than he wanted. The wild beast once let loose does not stop at the mark. Anyhow, the authors of the massacre got frightened at the work of their hands.

Colonel Vajev, after quoting the number of killed and wounded, exclaims, "Whose is the fault, it is not for me to say. God will judge!"

Ostashkin sent to the Governor-General of Eastern Siberia, Count Ignatiev (brother of the diplomatist), a report of the massacre, which he falsified as outrageously and as clumsily as only a man in a fit of unreasoning fear can do. For example, he conceals in his report not only the fact that about one-half of the exiles were wounded, but even that six of them were killed. That is why, in the official indictment, all the dead figure among the accused. The exiles were charged with having killed a policeman, Klebnikov, though by his own statement at his death-bed to another policeman, and by the examination of the wound, it was proved that he had been killed by mistake by the soldiers with a rifle bullet. The wounding of a number of soldiers was mentioned, though only one of them was touched with a ball, and so slightly that he did not even go to the hospital.

All this was done to make more plausible his version of the massacre of the 22nd of March, which was represented as a premeditated attack on the part of the exiles upon the soldiers sent to escort them. But Ostashkin's lies were quite gratuitous. The governor-general and the central government resolved to make a salutary example, and terrorize the whole body of Siberian exiles. And although the falsehood of Ostashkin's report was made clear in the course of a few days, the government endorsed the crime of Ostashkin, and punished the survivors of the butchery with a cruelty more

shocking than that shown on the 22nd of March by the infuriated soldiers, because it was cold-blooded.

To punish the survivors for armed resistance was impossible. They had in all only four loaded revolvers. Only four persons could possibly have fired, and some of them were presumably among the six killed. The charge of premeditation and moral complicity could not be supported, because it was evident that the affray occurred unexpectedly—for the exiles at least. So that the majority of the thirty could not possibly be accused of anything worse than sending identical petitions, going in a body to the police office one day, and refusing to go thither under escort the day after—all venial offences, if offences at all, for which, according to the code of laws under which they lived, they were amenable to disciplinary punishment. This was not sufficient, and therefore the central government ordered them to be tried according to another code which makes such offences capital crimes: it is the military code for war time. When an army is face to face with the enemy a stringent discipline must be preserved. The soldiers have to obey orders, and cannot be allowed to send collective petitions or interfere in any other way with the orders of their chiefs. It is very natural that all such acts should be assimilated to open rebellion. Once we admit war we must admit its logical consequences. But what is logical for soldiers in time of war, becomes a monstrosity when applied to common citizens in time of peace, as has been done by the govern-

ment with regard to the survivors of the Yakutsk massacre.

We have before us the verdict of the military tribunal instituted to judge them. Here we tread upon absolutely safe ground, for every paragraph of this ferocious document is as authentic as the three gallows and the many wrecked lives which were its consequences.

In the preamble of this verdict we are informed that, according to military code in time of war, "every open manifestation of opinion made by eight persons or more with the object of thwarting the orders of superiors, and obtaining their revocation, is *an open rebellion against the authorities.*" (Art. 263 mil. penal code, and Art. 110 in Book XX. of the military code.) In virtue of this law we read further: "The acts of the accused, who have presented in concert thirty identical petitions, asking for the repeal of the orders concerning the mode of their journey to the far north, as well as their refusal to come to the police office to hear the reply of the governor to the said petitions—*constitute acts of open rebellion intended to thwart the orders of the superiors.*"

We have translated literally, slightly condensing.

Thus the thirty exiles, by a monstrous fiction, were compared to soldiers in face of the enemy; their journey to Sredne Kolymsk, to some kind of military movement, which they refused to execute on account of its danger—a judicial joke, which would be amusing, were it not so ghastly.

The use of firearms was an aggravating cir-

cumstance, which told upon the fate of the three "ringleaders," Bernstein, Hausmann, and Zotoff.

With regard to the remaining twenty-seven, the participation in the "armed resistance" is *not even mentioned.* The five men condemned to penal servitude for life—Goz, Shender, Gurevich, Minor, and Orloff—were accused of being the most obstinate in refusing to go to the police station under escort, and the "most prominent" in presenting the collective petition. The rest, condemned to penal servitude for eight, fifteen, and twenty years, were pronounced guilty of the same offences, with extenuating circumstances, such as youth, sex, influence of others.

Two girls, Rose Frank and Anastasia Shechter, "have shown," runs their sentence, "good dispositions, and not merely consented to go under escort, but tried to persuade their companions to do the same, *and are therefore* condemned to the deprivation of all civil rights and four years of penal servitude."

It sounds like a slip of the pen, but it is only strict consistency; the two girls had atoned somewhat for their crime, still, having also sent petitions, they were "rebels," and were to be punished as such. The case of Magat makes this point still clearer; he was *not* present at Notkin's house on the 22nd March. Still, he was condemned to deprivation of all civil rights and to exile for life to the remotest parts of Siberia, because he sent a rebellious petition intending to thwart Ostashkin's orders.

Out of the thirty-five persons assembled in Notkin's house, thirty were exiles awaiting the

governor's reply to their petitions, but five were mere guests, who came by chance and had nothing to do with the affair. Two of them were killed in the affray. As to the remaining three, the verdict runs thus:—"As to Kapger, Zoroastrova (a lady), and Heiman, who have sent no petitions intended to thwart the order of the governor, and arrived at Yakutsk from the country unarmed, Kapger on the eve, and the two others at 11 o'clock on the morning of March 22nd, and knowing nothing of the crimes of their companions, went to Notkin's house to see some of them, and came a few minutes before the arrival of the troops . . . they are condemned: Kapger and Zoroastrova to deprivation of all privileges (as of noble birth) and civil rights, and to exile for life to the remotest parts of Siberia; Heiman (being of common extraction) to three years of imprisonment with the hardest labour that can be found for him." All this because they did not instantly obey the order of going to the police office under escort!

They had nothing to do with the affair—the order to go to the police office did not refer to them. But it was given to all the crowd, of which they happened to form a part, and they were bound to obey it instantly—always on the strength of the fiction that they were soldiers in face of the enemy and the officer Karamzine their chief. This judicial joke could certainly not be pushed farther.

The verdict of the Yakutsk military tribunal has been analyzed by us in its final form, as communicated by a telegram from St. Peters-

burg of July 21st, 1889, to the governor of Oriental Siberia, Count Ignatiev. It is a noteworthy fact that the central government has shown itself more cruel than the Yakutsk authorities. The Yakutsk military auditor, who had to revise the sentence of the tribunal, advised a milder punishment for many of the condemned than the one finally resolved upon by central government. Whilst in no case the prerogative of mercy has been exercised by the Tzar, the sentences of the eight women and the two boys under age have been aggravated by two or three years of penal servitude for each. Thus the central government more than approved that monstrous sentence, and, indeed, is alone responsible for it.

It is perfectly idle to inveigh against the irregularity of the judicial proceedings, the absence of counsel, and all guarantees for the accused at the Yakutsk trial. Neither counsel nor guarantee could be of any avail to the prisoners, since their acts, however innocent in themselves, came under articles which declared them capital crimes. The tribunal goes for nothing in all this story. In arbitrarily choosing the code of laws according to which the accused had to be tried, the administration chose the penalties likewise. So that we are strictly correct in saying that in the hanging of Bernstein, Hausmann, and Zotoff we have *a case of capital punishment inflicted by administrative order*, and that the rest were condemned to various terms of *hard labour also by administrative order*.

As a climax, the execution of Bernstein was positively ghastly. Being severely wounded

and unable to walk, he was taken to the gallows on his bed. The hangman fixed the rope round his neck, and then the bed was taken away and he was left to hang.

It is a relief to turn from these examples of men's cruelty, which are a dishonour to our common nature, to personal records of the three condemned men, whose last days are described to us by their comrades with religious faithfulness. They died as it is given to die only to men whose souls were filled with one great love, which purified them from all selfish and petty thoughts, and proved "stronger than death and the fear of death." There are their last letters to comrades and relatives which paint them better than any words of ours could do. By the noble courage, simplicity, and boundless devotion to their country, revealed in them, these letters can be placed by the side of Sophia Perovskaia's farewell to her mother. Yet they come from men who were rank and file people, whom we happened to hear of by mere chance—men who are true samples of the bulk of those who are persecuted in Russia, and sent to perish in the Siberian wilderness. It shows what moral strength is hidden in the hearts of young Russia, and at what a price the present bureaucratic despotism is maintained.

Forgetful of himself, and fully absorbed by the thought of his friends, his country, and his cause, Bernstein writes:—

"My dear, my good friends and comrades,—I do not know whether I shall be allowed to wish you good-bye. I can hardly hope to do so. But in my thoughts I have said good-bye to

you one and all, and I have been deeply impressed during all this time by the friendship you bore me. Let us, then, say good-bye mentally, dear comrades and friends, and let our last farewell be illuminated by the hope of a better future for our unfortunate country, which we love so well.

"Not an atom of force is lost in this world. Therefore the life of a man cannot be lost. We must never regret such a life. Let the dead bury the dead You are united by a moral link of the highest order with your unhappy country. Do not say that your life is spent in vain because it is spent in the midst of suffering, in exile, and in prison. To suffer the suffering of one's country, to constitute a living reproach to the progenitors of evil and of darkness, surely this is a great cause, a noble work. If this should prove your last mission, you need not complain. You have brought your mite to the altar of the struggle for the freedom of our people. And, who knows, perhaps you will enjoy better days. Perhaps you will live to see the happy moment when the country, enfranchised, shall open her arms to her faithful children, who love her and whom she loves, so as to celebrate with them the feast of freedom. Then, friends, you will remember us, and this will be our great reward for all our trials. Never let this hope leave you any more than it will abandon me, even at the foot of the gallows.

"I embrace you warmly, with all my heart and all my soul.

"Yours ever,

"BERNSTEIN."

Hausmann left only a few lines :—

"I am not in a mood to write long," he says. "The thread of my thoughts is interrupted every now and then by recollections and images from the past. Let me send you from the depths of my heart a farewell and a God-speed to you and to all my companions in the struggle. If you live to rejoice at the day of common deliverance, I shall be with you in spirit, if I may use this expression. I die with unshaken faith in the triumph of justice.

"Farewell for ever, brothers,

"Yours, A. HAUSMANN."

The third of the condemned, N. Zotoff, wrote to his parents and to his comrades a few hours before the execution. His letter to his parents concludes with the following touching words :—

". . . . Jenny (his betrothed) has just come to pay me her visit—the last one! She has witnessed the last hours of my life, and will tell you all about it. As to myself I am unable to do it. I will only tell you that I feel very calm and even elated. But I am much tired as well, both physically and mentally : the strain upon the nerves during the last two days was so great. My dear ones, my own! Let me press you for the last time to my heart. Do not grieve about me: I die with a light heart, conscious of the justice of my cause, with a sense of strength in my breast. The only thing which saddens me is the thought of those dear ones whom I leave behind. What are my sufferings as compared with theirs? For me all will be over in a few hours. But they!— What a moral strength they must have to bear it all to

the last. . . . I can hardly think of anything else when I cast a glance upon Jenny. . . . The guards have just entered. They brought me the clothes I must put on for the execution. I have already donned them, and sit in the shirt and trousers of the condemned, shivering with cold. Do not think my hand trembles from fear. But farewell, my dear ones, farewell for ever!

"Yours to the grave,

"NICHOLAS."

One would think the Yakutsk butchery must be the worst case of cruelty, brutality, and cynical lawlessness. But it is not so. Worse things have happened under Alexander III. An infamous measure was devised to terrify into submission the growing discontent. This is the so-called abolition of the distinction between political and common law prisoners. In reality it has another meaning. The position of the political prisoners has always been, and remains different from, and, except in one point, worse than that of the other offenders. They undergo the full term of their penalties in actual imprisonment, often in solitary confinement, which is never the case with felons. They are never sure of being set free after the expiration of their term, and they are more isolated and more worried with interference.

All this remains unchanged. The assimilation of political offenders to felons means, therefore, only this: that they may be flogged by order of the gaolers and administration, whereas formerly that could not be. I do not know

whether the English will fully realize the terrible aggravation of the lot of our political prisoners caused by such a change. English people feel differently from Russians about corporal punishment. For us it is a mortal insult—worse than the switching across the face with a horse-whip. We speak, of course, of the educated classes. When, in 1887, General Trepoff ordered the flogging of a political prisoner, Vera Zassulitch shot him, inflicting upon him a severe wound, which was within a hairbreadth of being mortal. But the jury, which chanced to be composed of petty state officials, acquitted her, considering the flogging of an educated man an insult so unspeakable as to justify her act. Few of us are so cowardly as not to prefer twenty deaths to the degradation of such a punishment. That feeling is not a secret in high quarters. They knew perfectly at St. Petersburg what they were doing when they passed this measure. It was resolved upon in 1886, but it was finally decreed on March 8th, 1888, by an order signed by Galkin Vrassky, the head of the central prison department. This order states categorically that "no difference shall be admitted" in favour of political prisoners in respect of punishment, and that "flogging with the rod and with the whip shall be admitted."

This order was addressed to the commander of the Island of Sakhalien, and a few months later, September 23, 1888, three political exiles were flogged there.

On July 6, 1888, one of the exiles, Vasily Volnov, had been struck in the face by a certain Kamenshikov, superintendent of the central

provision stores, and answered by striking his assailant in return. His twenty companions took up his case, and went in a body to their superiors to intercede in his favour. The affair was declared a rebellion, and all the twenty exiles were punished with various terms of imprisonment. As to Volnov, who was the offending party, and was under lock and key when the demonstration took place, and two other exiles, Tomashevsky and Maisner, who were the spokesmen of their companions, they were condemned by the Sakhalien administration to be flogged.

This infamous sentence was executed on the 23rd of September.

In Kara, which is the chief penal settlement in Siberia, the application of the brutal punishment has resulted in one of the most frightful tragedies on record. We have received no less than seven communications upon it from various places, one of which emanates from a friend having connections in official quarters. Besides, the fact has been officially confirmed (*Times*, March 14, 1890). So that there can be no doubt as to the main facts of this horrible story. Here are some details which are as authentic.

The tragedy of November, 1889, had its origin in events which occurred a long time ago. In August, 1888, the Governor-General, Baron Korf, while on a visit to the women's prison, entered the ward where lay Mme. Solnzeff Kovalsky, in the last stage of consumption. At the appearance of Baron Korf she did not rise from her bed, and being reminded rather

roughly of her duty, she answered that it was utterly indifferent to her, whether she was in the presence of the Governor-General or a common gaoler, for she could not rise to anyone. For this want of deference the Governor ordered her to be sent to the prison of Verchny-Udinsk, and locked up in a solitary cell. A few days afterwards a police officer, Bobrovsky, who was not employed at the prison, and even did not live at Kara, but acted as a volunteer by permission of Massukov, the director of the prison, broke, with several guards, into the cell of Mme. Solnzeff Kovalsky early in the morning, while she was still in bed. Without giving her time to dress herself, they dragged her in her night-dress to the office, where she was stripped amidst the coarsest jokes, and a convict's dress put upon her.

When this fact became known to the other women, they sent a complaint, asking for the removal or punishment of the director Massukov, to the Governor-General. But as it had no effect, they resolved to have recourse to the only means of self-protection the prisoners have at their disposal—the so-called hunger strike.

The Siberian administration, though not scrupling to commit any villany which can be concealed, is much afraid of cases ending in death, which get known, stir up public opinion, and attract general attention to their actions.

Three times the women of the Kara prison resorted to this terrible weapon, but they were baffled in their efforts. The first hunger strike ended because the director Massukov informed

the women that he had tendered his resignation. The fact was true, but the Governor-General refused to accept it. The women began their second hunger strike, which ended upon the false news that Massukov was removed by a telegram from the Governor to another prison. When the deception practised upon them was discovered, the women "went on strike" for the third time. It was in August, 1889. This third hunger strike lasted, according to one correspondent, seventeen days; according to another, twenty-two. It was certainly very long, for one of the women showed symptoms of raving madness in consequence of starvation. Most of the women could not move. The prison authorities threatened that they should be fed artificially if they persisted in refusing to take food.

It was at this point that Mme. Nadejda Sihida resolved to sacrifice herself in order to put an end to this intolerable condition. She had been brought to the Kara prison only a few months before, having been arrested in 1886, in connection with the printing of the *Narodnaia Volia*. Formerly she had been a superior teacher in St. Petersburg, supporting by her work her mother and a younger sister. Their family was of Greek extraction, though entirely Russianized. She was the eldest daughter, and was twenty-nine at the time of her death.

Without telling anybody of her intentions, she asked, through a guard, to see the director Massukov upon important business. On being admitted to his office she struck him in the face. Her idea was that, whatever might be her own

fate, it would be impossible for Massukov, after such an insult, to keep his post. (In fact he was removed.)

Sihida was immediately transferred to the common law ward, where she was soon joined by three of her companions—Mary Kovalevsky, wife of Professor Kovalevsky, of Kiev, Miss Kolujny, and Miss Svetlizky. A report of her act was sent to the Governor-General.

She expected to be hanged; but a more terrible fate was in store for her. On the 24th of October the Kara prisoners, men and women, were assembled in their respective prisons to listen to the new decree of the Governor-General, making the political prisoners liable to corporal punishment in case of open breach of discipline.

The resolution as to Sihida's case was not yet known at that time to the prisoners, but they could already guess it.

In this extremity, hunger strikes were no longer of any avail, and the prisoners resolved to resort to another kind of strike, which we may call the strike of death!

The men, thirty in number, after hearing the new decree, declared to their director that being unable to protect themselves from such an outrage, they would destroy themselves in a body if corporal punishment should be inflicted upon any of them. They asked him to send to St. Petersburg a telegram soliciting the suspension of the new decree. But the director of the men's prison refused to risk such a step. Then the men held a consultation, at which it was proposed that, rather than live under the threat of such an ignominy, they should poison

themselves in a body, in order, by such a terrible protest, to rouse public opinion, and render impossible the perpetration of the intended insult. And such was their feeling that the majority was in favour of this resolution. But a strong minority was against it, and it was resolved to wait.

They had not to wait long. On the 27th of October, three days after the promulgation of the new decree, the following order arrived from the Governor-General, Baron Korf:—"Inflict corporal punishment, according to regulation, upon Nadejda Sihida for insulting the director of the prison."

The words "according to regulation" meant that the prison surgeon had to examine the state of health of the condemned person, and testify to fitness to endure the punishment.

Being informed of the telegram, the prison surgeon, Gurvich, went to see Gomulezky, the superintendent of the common law ward, where Sihida was detained, and informed him that Sihida was in weak health, and was under his treatment for heart disease. Upon this Gomulezky telegraphed to Shamilin, the chief of the common law prisons in Oriental Siberia, that the surgeon refused to be present at the execution of the sentence. In reply to this Shamilin telegraphed: "Execute the sentence without the surgeon." But Gomulezky lingered still.

Then, on the 6th of November, there arrived at Ust Kara, the village where the prison stands, Bobrovsky, the same officer who had distinguished himself in the affair of Mme.

Solnzeff Kovalsky. He went forthwith to the prison. Half an hour later the preparations for the flogging were made.

Sihida received one hundred blows on November 6th, and on November 8th she died from the effects of the flogging.

As soon as the news of this outrage reached the men's prison, they assembled, and all the thirty (one correspondent says seventeen) took poison. Then they went to their cells. But as the quantity of poison they could smuggle into the prison was not sufficient for all, its action was slow. Two men died in the course of a few hours—Ivan Kalujny and Bobokhov. The convulsions of the dying men, and the dead silence in all the cells, aroused the guards' attention. The surgeon was summoned, and with the help of the guards, administered, emetics. No further deaths occurred.

The three women who were in the same ward with Nadejda Sihida—Mary Kovalevsky, Kolujny, and Svetlizky—poisoned themselves, and died on the day of her death.

The whole civilized world was horrified at their ghastly story, and the Russian Government was bound to do something in order not to be considered altogether barbarous. In 1890 corporal punishment for women was abolished. But it is still maintained for men.

Thus people of refinement and education have to live under the permanent threat of this infamous outrage, which every brutal official can inflict upon them.

The question whether the torture is applied to political offenders in Russia has been often

asked and discussed in the foreign press. I do not believe that mediæval torture, as such, exists in Russian prisons, and I have never supported this charge.

But is the breaking of bones and flaying alive the only form of suffering which can be called torture?

We read that the Inquisition often tortured its victims by putting them in such a position that they believed every moment to be their last. Is not the constant threat of a punishment which a certain class of people are known to consider infinitely worse than death—is not this torture in the fullest sense of the word?

XIV.

NIHILISM.

THE peculiar character of the Russian revolutionary movement, known under the name of "Nihilism," has been determined by the special nature of the latter-day despotism of the Romanoffs, which is unendurably oppressive for the masses, and galling in the extreme for the individual.

Neither the one nor the other of these incentives to rebellion, taken separately, could bring men to such a pitch of indignation as leads to the acts associated with the name of Nihilism. And the reader will surely admit that during the reign of Alexander III. both the stimulants were provided in very strong doses.

What have been the fortunes of Nihilism since it appeared in the fire and thunder of explosion thirteen years ago?

But what is Nihilism? A score of books have been written upon this subject—hundreds of magazine articles, without counting the newspapers' accounts. But up to the present the majority of the English have a very vague idea of the party which has been so much talked about. It is rather a humiliating confession for

those who have been engaged for years in the production of this literature. But it is no use denying facts. The majority of generally well-informed men have very strange ideas about the so-called Nihilists. Struck by their methods and the misleading name given to them, very many people still consider them to be "Anarchists," deniers of everything, striving after destruction for destruction's sake. But, on the other hand, there are some people who have come to the conclusion that the "Nihilists" are not Socialists, but simply Radicals, striving for political freedom and constitutional forms of government. The late Charles Bradlaugh expressed such views in several of his magazine articles upon the Continental revolutionary movements, which he had studied very carefully.

Finally, there is a third set of people, and they are not few, who try to bring their sympathy with the Nihilists into accordance with their abhorrence of violent methods, by maintaining that only a small and extreme fraction of Nihilists are bomb-throwers and dynamiters, and that the "genuine article" consists of decent people, who are in favour of obtaining political freedom for their country by peaceful, even "constitutional" methods, overlooking the small detail, that the possibility of "constitutional" methods implies the existence of a constitution, which is precisely what Russia so sorely lacks.

Besides the bad name which we, Russian revolutionists, must needs use, under protest, if we want people to understand what we are speaking about—besides this name, the vague-

ness and contradictoriness in the general understanding of our movement is due to two causes —its complicated character on one hand, and on the other the rapid changes which it has undergone in a very short time.

Thus Charles Bradlaugh suggests that "it is probable that in the great towns a sort of anarchist socialism is popular with the more educated speakers and writers." This is quite a mistake. Anarchism does not exist in the Russia of to-day, at all events, it is so feebly represented as to give not the slightest sign of its existence. Within the last *seventeen years* there has been not a single paper or pamphlet published in the Russian language, in Russia or abroad, in the interests of anarchism—not a single profession of faith at any of the numberless trials, not a single public manifestation of any kind. Russian socialism of the last decade is entirely social democratic. But only fifteen or seventeen years ago the whole of socialist Russia was anarchical; although this anarchism, as the reader will presently see, had nothing whatever to do with the dynamite Anarchists of modern times.

This is not the only transformation which has taken place in our movement. It was propagandist in 1873-7, terrorist in 1878-9; in 1880-2 it was chiefly military, and not unlike the Spanish patriotic movement; and it has become to a large extent civil and popular once again within the last eight years. It is on the eve of a new transformation nowadays, and there is no saying whether it will become military, civil, or terroristic, or all the three combined.

The primitive and genuine Nihilists, those

who actually bore that name in Russia, and to some extent deserved it, were a philosophical and ethical school, long ago extinct in Russia, which has been immortalized by Turgueneff in his novel, "Fathers and Children."

The intellectual movement, of which Bazaroff is a living impersonation, sprang up in our country in the epoch following the Crimean defeat, which marks a general breaking down of the despotic *régime* of Nicholas.

Serfdom, recognized as the source of Russia's poverty, weakness, and of the low standard of public morality, was abolished in 1861—and the country turned over a new leaf. The enfranchisement of the millions of peasantry was a measure that revolutionized the entire moral, economic, and social life of our country. Not peasants alone were slaves in Russia in the old times. The absolute uncontrolled power of the serf-owners, who formed the bulk of the cultured and governing class, produced certain habits of despotism which extended to all the spheres of national life. The children were slaves to their parents, the wives to their husbands, the petty officials to their superiors, the employed to the employer. A good education was no guarantee against the vitiating influences of this immoral institution. It was at this time that the French, who had to deal with the most cultured part of Russian society, said that one only needs to scratch a Russian to find a Tartar. Tartars our fathers were, the varnish of civilization notwithstanding, and their families knew it better than anyone else.

The abolition of serfdom, the worst form of

dependency of men upon men, was the signal for a general rising of all the oppressed part of the community. There was throughout all Russia a universal outburst of rebellion against all sorts of dependency, all authority imposed upon men's freedom in the domain of personal conduct as well as in the domain of thought. The individual, tired of oppression, rose in all his pride and power, breaking the chains of ancient traditions, and recognizing no other guidance but his individual mind.

Such were the true Nihilists, the destroyers, who did not trouble themselves about what was to be built after them.

They did not exactly deny everything, for they believed firmly, fanatically, in science and in the power of the individual mind. But they thought nothing else worth the slightest respect, and they attacked and ran down family, religion, art, and social institutions, with all the more vehemence the higher they were held in the opinion of their fellow-countrymen.

Something similar took place in Germany in the so-called "Sturm und Drang" period, and for similar reasons. But the Germans of the first quarter of this century had not so much to destroy, and they had not the same lust for destruction: there was much in their past they had reasons to love and respect. Besides, in those days, European science and philosophy had not at their command such lethal weapons of destruction as were put at the service of the Russian Nihilists in the second half of this century.

Thus, Nihilism proper, the Nihilism embodied

in Bazaroff, was a genuine Russian apparition. It was an impassioned protest against the former annihilation of the individual. With all its exaggerations and mistakes it was a grand movement, for its basis was sound, and its effect most beneficial in a country like ours.

Nihilism of Bazaroff's type was dead and buried about ten years before the starting of the present revolutionary movement. No one denies art and poetry nowadays, no one wears ugly dresses on principle, no one protests against the idea of men's duties towards the community. No one preaches against the obligations imposed upon people by family life. But there is no country where the relations between parents and children and men and women are based to such an extent upon the principle of equality, and there is no society so broad-minded and tolerant as the Russian. Much of this is due to the gallant struggle of the early Nihilists, who were the first to engraft upon Russia the proud Western conception of individuality which struck root, and will spread with every generation.

It is impossible not to see a close relationship between the early Nihilism and the present militant one, in which the old spirit of personal independence is revived, coupled this time with social feeling, urging the individual to sacrifice himself for the many who feel and suffer like himself. But in its state of absolute purity, unalloyed with any social feeling, stern and fierce as expounded by Bazaroff, Nihilism could not stand for long. The Russians are the least individualistic of all people in Europe, the feeling

of organic union with their countrymen being with them the strongest feeling. The striving for individual happiness, however refined, could not suit their sympathetic gregarious nature, craving for works of devotion to others. Even in the palmy days of Nihilism of Bazaroff's school, there was in the movement an undercurrent making for another direction. It may be called social Nihilism, as opposed to the individualistic, and was represented in 1860 by Nicolas Tchernyshevsky, the publicist, journalist, economist, and novelist, whose name is familiar to all those who have studied the Russian question.

Tchernyshevsky was a socialist, and the father of the Russian revolutionary movement. He preached the absolute devotion of the individual to the cause of regeneration of his country. Only he gave the idea of self-sacrifice an individualistic interpretation. "All men's actions," he said, "are stimulated by egotism, and have no other scope except individual happiness. But one person whose intellectual and moral standard is low finds his pleasure and happiness in making money or in drinking or over-eating himself, whilst another is happy in doing good to his fellow men, in dying, if necessary, for their sake." And Tchernyshevsky went on scoffing at and ridiculing self-sacrifice as a logical absurdity, while preaching it passionately in practice. The theory of moralized egotism and egotistical self-abnegation was developed by Tchernyshevsky and his followers with admirable skill and dialectical subtlety, and served as a transition to the doc-

trine of absolute devotion to the good of the community, which the next generation transformed into a sort of religion.

As time went on the influence of Tchernyshevsky gained ground upon that of the genuine Nihilism, represented by Pisareff, a young highly gifted journalist, and the writers grouped around him. The generation of 1870 was entirely educated by Tchernyshevsky, but it took from him only the kernel of his ethics, dropping as useless and cumbersome his theory of all-pervading individualism.

A new conception made its way at this epoch into social science, in opposition to the former individualistic theory of social contract for securing mutual individual happiness: that of the integrality of the body politic, in which individuals are but transitory parts. Its source is to be traced to Auguste Comte, the father of Positivism, whose philosophical theories (not religion) found a ready acceptance in Russia. But its chief propagator in Russia was undoubtedly Herbert Spencer, whose works have all been translated into Russian, and exercised a great influence upon the mind of our generation.

The idea of duty towards the community threw into the background that of the duty of the individual towards himself.

A little volume, which appeared at this epoch, embodied this new tendency very forcibly and consistently. It was from the pen of Peter Lavroff, the present refugee in Paris, then professor of mathematics in one of the St. Petersburg military academies, and bears the modest

title of "Historical Letters." Its leading idea is that of the enormous indebtedness of the cultured minority to the masses, who in the course of centuries have toiled and suffered, undergoing indescribable privations in order that a small minority might be able to cultivate their minds, and transmit to their children the accumulated inheritance of knowledge and moral and intellectual refinement.

To work for the good of the people ceases to be a pleasure in which a man can indulge or not, as he chooses. It becomes a stringent duty he is bound to fulfil, and for which he cannot claim much credit to himself. It is the simple repayment of the debt he has contracted in accepting the inheritance so heavily paid for by the mass of the people.

Another writer, Schapov, whose name is little known abroad, must be mentioned here, because his influence in shaping the views of our generation can be compared only to that of Tchernyshevsky. Schapov is the historian of the Russian peasantry. He was professor of history in the Kazan University up to 1862, when he was arrested, and exiled to Siberia, for a speech made at a great street demonstration organized to protest against the slaughter of peasants in the Bezdna district.

This great demonstration brought Schapov's name for the first time into public notice. His works appeared afterwards, forming a brilliant sequel to such a beginning.

Schapov's philosophy can be best described as the modern incarnation of *Slavophilism*, purged of monarchical superstition and orthodox

bigotry. He is national without being a partisan either of Tzardom or of the orthodox church. All his erudite works are devoted to the study of the past history of the Russian people. His object is to bring to light the constructive principles of political and social life, adhered to by the masses of the peasantry as opposed to those which the Muscovite, and afterwards the St. Petersburg monarchy forced upon them. These principles are self-government and local autonomy in political and ecclesiastical matters, as opposed to the administrative and ecclesiastic centralization of the State. In the economical domain, it was communistic ownership of land, meadows, forests, fisheries, and all natural riches, as opposed to the private property inculcated by the State. In the chaotic popular movements of the past he has discovered system and harmony, showing the masses of the Russian peasantry to be an excellent plastic material for the building up of a State, very different from the one which temporary historical necessity has actually constituted.

But this historical necessity has become a thing of the past, whilst the peasants have remained unchanged. The conclusion from this might be easily drawn.

Schapov's voluminous and rather heavy works (written in an atrocious style) have been studied with avidity by the entire advanced youth of our generation. Except Tchernyshevsky, no writer has had such a deep and lasting influence upon our intellectual movement. He gave a solid, scientific basis to the

whole literature upon the modern peasants, so extensive and varied, numbering among its writers the most gifted men of our literary generation. They all belong to Schapov's school, confirming with regard to modern peasantry what Schapov discovered with regard to their ancestors.

Educated Russia has always been democratic, we may say, *peasantist*, in her feelings, and not without cause. The peasant class is not merely the most numerous, but the soundest, bravest, and most thoroughly original of our classes. To prove that this is not a dream of democratic enthusiasts, we have only to refer to our famous novelists, who in their quality of great artists are above suspicion of exaggeration or misrepresentation. Their collective work is a revelation of Russia, as a whole, in which the peasants have a conspicuous place of their own. Now Turgueneff's sketches, collected in the "Sportsman's Sketches," Dostoevsky's "Buried Alive," and Tolstoi's numerous scenes and stories from peasant life, show us a series of living types which command respect, sometimes admiration, and testify to the great gifts and the vast amount of moral energy hidden in the masses of our common people.

The writers of the past generation have prepared the ground for the young ones, creating that powerful, peculiarly Russian, democratic feeling, which is the mainspring of our revolutionary movement. The idea of duty towards the people, and of the historical debt of the educated minority towards the masses, was readily accepted by our sensitive, impressionable youth,

as a new basis for their ethics. Still, it was an abstraction, a dry reasoned-out conception, which could not stir men's hearts. But thanks to the above-mentioned writers, the idea of the people assumed a concrete palpable form, appealing alike to reason, enthusiasm, and pity.

With our emotional, sympathetic people, it became a momentous impulsive power, urging them to gladly give up wealth, personal preferment, even life, provided they could give some relief to the people whom they thought so great, and knew to be so unfortunate.

And now the socialists of the West came to tell the young enthusiast that there is a way to solve the social question and remove for ever the causes of popular sufferings. These theories appeared as the last word of social philosophy, sanctioned by the authority of the greatest names in economical science, and by the adhesion of many hundred thousand workmen of the international socialism, standing at the head of the world's democracy.

The Russians jumped at it as at a new revelation. The new apostles found their gospel, for which henceforward they would live and die.

. . . . . .

From 1870, the Russian Revolution ceases to be something apart, and becomes a branch of international socialism, which, at that epoch, descended from the clouds, and became for the first time the embodiment of the working men's aspirations. Still, the peculiar conditions of our country gave to the Russian socialist movement a somewhat different shape and history.

At that time, as nowadays, international socialism was divided into two unequal sections, the social democrats and the anarchists. The former advocated the abolition of private property in the instruments of labour and their collective ownership by the workmen. But they wanted to preserve the present political organizations, which should be made an instrument for the economical rebuilding of the State. Thus, for the social democrats the practical object was to take possession of political power. Peaceful electoral agitation was their chief weapon, the element of physical revolution being admitted only incidentally, if at all.

The anarchists, headed then by our countryman, Michael Bakunin, were in favour of a total remoulding both of economical and of political organization, advocating the total abolition of the State, and the substitution for it of a series of small, absolutely independent and freely constituted communes. Parliamentary institutions were for them of no possible use, and they relied for the realization of their ideals entirely upon the spontaneous action of the masses risen in rebellion.

Of these two doctrines, the last had by far the greater fascination for the Russian socialists of 1870. It promised more, for to abolish at one stroke men's economical and political bondage, was like killing two birds with one stone. Then it made of no account the political backwardness of Russia, which appeared rather more favoured than other countries. The antiquated autocracy was easier to overthrow than a constitutional monarchy based upon the

popular vote. According to Bakunin the village "Mir" had only to be freed from the oppressive tutorship of the State to become an ideal form of anarchical government by all with the consent of all.

The Russians are very subject to spiritual contagion, and often accept or drop a theory in a body. In 1870 the whole of advanced Russia was anarchist. The autocracy was opposed simply because it was a government, no substantial difference being admitted to exist between Russian autocracy and, let us say, the English parliamentary *régime*. Accordingly, nothing was expected, and nothing was asked, from the educated classes and the liberal opposition, which was in favour of a constitutional government for Russia. The socialists of this epoch based all their hopes upon the peasants. Thousands of young people of both sexes went upon a crusade amongst the peasants; the more exalted with the object of calling them to open rebellion, the more moderate with the intention of preparing the ground for the future revolution by peaceful socialist propaganda. This was one of the most touching and characteristic episodes of the young movement, when the motto "all for the people and nothing for ourselves" was the order of the day.

Most of the young enthusiasts—for they were all young—belonged to the upper classes. The peasants, for whose awakening they proposed to give their all, had been the serfs of their fathers. The feeling of suspicion towards their former masters was so strong as to render utterly hopeless any attempt on the part of the "gentlemen"

to obtain any influence among the common people. The propagandists therefore renounced all their privileges, and became themselves common manual labourers, workmen and workwomen in the fields, at the factories, at the wharves and railways, in all places where common workpeople assembled. They supported cheerfully all hardships and privations, and considered themselves amply repaid for all their trouble if they succeeded in winning here and there some adherents to their cause.

This socialist crusade was a complete failure. The peasants only opened their eyes with wonder at the summons to rebellion, on the part of strangers, who came nobody knew from whence, and wished nobody knew what. They lent, it is true, a very willing ear to the propaganda of socialism. But there was no way of getting adherents without attracting the attention of the police, in a country where everything is watched. In the course of 1873-4, fifteen hundred propagandists and agitators, or their friends and supposed accomplices, were arrested in the thirty-seven provinces of the Empire, and thrown into prison. One-half of them were released after a few months' detention; the rest were kept in preliminary confinement for from two to four years, during which seventy-three of them either died or lost their reason. In 1877 a part of them (193) were tried and condemned to various punishments, from simple exile to ten years of hard labour in the Siberian mines.

This was a death blow to anarchism. Whatever may be one's views upon the best form of

society in the future, it was evident that in the present the political question was not so irrelevant to the cause of the workers themselves as the early socialists tried to believe. Thousands of lives were wrecked for saying in private things which are proclaimed from the house-tops in all free countries. The propagandists who were ready to devote their lifetime to the work of enlightening the people, were not allowed to devote to it more than a few days, sometimes a few hours. Political freedom was evidently something worth having, be it only for the sake of enabling the people's friends to be of some use to them.

But theories, once adopted, do not disappear so easily. The passions spoke first; and men began to act in the right direction before they had reasoned out their action. The wanton cruelty with which political prisoners were treated, the horrors of preliminary detention, the barbarous punishment inflicted for offences so trifling, all this proved unendurable even to the mild, patient Russians. The spirit of revenge was kindled, giving birth to the first attacks upon the government, known by the name of terrorism. It began by an act of individual retaliation which, under the circumstances, had all the dignity of a solemn act of public justice. A girl, Vera Zassulitch, shot General Trepoff, who ordered the flogging of a political prisoner. On March 31, 1878, she was acquitted by the jury, though she never denied her act. In 1878, terrorism was accepted as a system of warfare by the most influential and energetic section of Russian revolutionists

grouped around the paper *Zemlia and Volia* (Land and Liberty). But at first this practical struggle with political despotism was carried on under the banner of political non-interference. "The question of constitution does not interest us," said the terrorists of this epoch in their pamphlet and in their paper, *Land and Liberty*, "the essential part of our activity is the propaganda amongst the people. In striking the worst amongst the officials we merely want to protect our companions from the worst treatment by the government and its agents. The terrorists must be looked upon as a small detachment protecting the bulk of an army at some dangerous passage."

This attempt to find a way out of the contradiction between theory and practice could not hold its position for long, because it was illogical on the face of it. Since it was recognized that the socialist propaganda, to be effective, needed protection against wilful interruption, the natural course to follow was to obtain such changes in the political constitution as would give it the permanent and real protection of the laws. As to terrorism, whatever its ultimate effect upon the government, its immediate consequences could not be other than the aggravation of severities and the increase of the obstacles to peaceful socialist propaganda. In fact, the attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable was soon abandoned, and a few months later, in 1879, there came a split in the revolutionary party. A small fraction stuck to the old banner, and declared against both political action and terrorism, and for the continuation of simple propaganda, not-

withstanding the overwhelming odds against it. It grouped itself around a paper called *Tcherny Peredtel.* This party had but a small following, and did nothing of importance. The paper also had but a short life, being detected in January, 1880, a fortnight after the publication of its only number. In 1888 it was resuscitated abroad, where it is published up to the present time in the form of a magazine, now bearing the title of *Social Democrat*, with the most orthodox social democratic programme. Of this new departure we will speak later on.

Now we will follow the fortunes of the majority which made a step forward, having written plainly upon their banner the political emancipation of their country as the immediate object of the revolutionary party. They founded the paper *Narodnaia Volia*, and constituted the party of the same name, which may be considered the embodiment of "Nihilism," as understood abroad. It was that body, with the famous Executive Committee at its head, which was at the bottom of all the Nihilists' attempts and conspiracies.

In proclaiming political revolution its immediate aim, the Narodnaia Volia party did not renounce socialism. But it certainly had to renounce the last traces of anarchism it may have retained. When once the necessity of fighting for political freedom was recognized, it was natural to consider how to take the best possible advantage of representative institutions in the future. This means to utilize them as an instrument of reforms, as well as a protec-

tion of the propaganda preliminary to those reforms. Thus the Russian anarchists, by the very logic of their position, were converted into social democrats. The programme of the Narodnaia Volia issued in 1880, the year after the split, shows the rapidity and thoroughness of this change. It is above all a programme of political reform, its requisites being :—

1. A permanent representative assembly, having the supreme control and direction in all general State affairs.

2. Provincial self-government secured by the election of all public functionaries.

3. Independence of the village commune ("Mir") as an economical and administrative unit.

4. Complete liberty of conscience, speech, press, meetings, association, and electoral agitation.

5. Manhood suffrage.

6. Substitution of a territorial militia for the standing army.

This was their political programme. The economical programme is summed up in two paragraphs :—

7. Nationalization of land.

8. Series of measures tending to transfer the possession of factories to workmen.

These paragraphs make the programme a socialistic one, but it is strictly social democratic. The element of physical force plays a part only in the political revolution. The re-moulding of the country's economical organization is understood to be carried on exclusively by legislation.

This programme differs from that of the social democrats of other countries in the greater stress laid upon agrarian reform. Its authors do not think Russia sufficiently developed industrially to advocate the immediate introduction of collective ownership by the workmen of factories and industrial concerns—and we think they are right in this. They undoubtedly are right on the other hand in considering the Russian peasantry fully competent to carry out any land nationalization scheme. Thus it may be said that so far as economics is concerned Nihilism is social democracy proposing to begin its work from the other end. This party is called in Russia National Socialists (*Sozialisty Narodniki*) by way of distinction from the social democrats proper, who have recently appeared in Russia.

The true distinction of the Russian Nihilists as a body lies, however, not in their methods of carrying out social reforms, but in the fact that for the time being they had to put off the idea of social reforms and devote their energies to a political struggle. The Russian Nihilists may be described as a branch of International Social Democracy, which took the lead in the struggle for political freedom in Russia.

The peasants, owing to their ignorance and the vastness of the areas over which they live scattered, cannot be effectively appealed to in the present phase of our revolutionary struggle. The Russian revolution is a town revolution, and has to find its support in the townspeople, who understand and desire political freedom. These are the educated Russians of all classes,

including the workmen of big towns as well as representatives of the privileged classes. The Nihilist efforts to achieve that great national end have been of a double nature—partly destructive, partly constructive. The first need not be dwelt upon long, for it had an echo all over the world. It consisted in a series of attempts against the Tzar, which profoundly stirred the whole of educated Russia, brought forward the political question to the exclusion of everything else, and divided Russia into two hostile camps, between whom at one moment victory seemed vacillating.

The constructive work of the Nihilists is represented by their efforts to take advantage of a time of public excitement to organize a body of conspirators strong enough to attempt an open military revolution. This part of the Nihilists' activity is less known and little appreciated, because they did not succeed in carrying it to a practical result; yet it is certainly very remarkable what difficulties were overcome. The years 1881–82 mark the nearest approach of the Russian revolution to an actual insurrection similar to that of the Decembrists in 1825. From 1880 the revolutionary ideas began to make rapid progress in the army, especially in the St. Petersburg garrison and Kronstadt navy. An important secret organization was founded, headed by some patriotic officers, such as Lieutenant Sukhanov and Baron Stromberg in Kronstadt, and Captain Pokhitonov and Rogatchev in St. Petersburg. Scores of officers of all arms and different grades joined the conspiracy, which very soon extended its ramifica-

tions all over the empire. It included men of the highest reputation and brilliant military antecedents, such as Colonel Michael Ashenbrenner, the above-mentioned Captains Pokhitonov, Stromberg, and many others, some of them commanders of independent corps. The soldiers were at the same time approached by socialist workmen, who made propaganda in their midst. In one important body of troops I will not particularize, but one which was in possession of guns, it occurred that the two rival revolutionary organizations, the *Narodnaia Volia* and the *Tcherny Perediel*, happened to have worked simultaneously without knowing it, the first among the officers, the latter among the privates. Both were so successful that after a time the two streams met. One morning one of the officers coming unexpectedly to the barracks, noticed that the soldiers were reading some newspaper, which they hastily concealed under the table at his appearance. He was curious to know what it was, and ordered the paper to be handed over to him. It was a fresh number of the *Tcherny Perediel*. He said nothing, and took the copy with him to show his companions his discovery. The soldiers considered themselves irretrievably lost. Great was their delight when a few days later they learned from their friends in the *Tcherny Perediel*, with whom the *Narodnaia Volia* communicated, that they had nothing to fear, because their officers were their brethren in the cause. The result was a deputation on the part of the privates, which respectfully informed their commanders that they were quite willing at any

given moment to appear before the Palace with their guns and make it a heap of ruins in a quarter of an hour.

In several other independent bodies of troops the revolution was so strongly represented as to render almost certain the adhesion of the whole body at the decisive moment. The military organization had its own central committee, independent in all its interior affairs, but all the military conspirators were pledged by a solemn oath to rise in arms at the bidding of the Executive Committee, and come to the place assigned to them with as many of their men as they should be able to bring with them.

One word would have sufficed to effect an actual military rising. But this word was not uttered, and no action took place.

The spread of revolutionary feeling was so rapid in the army that the Central Committee hoped to be able to strike a great blow and make the insurrection a successful one. The rising was deferred from week to week, and from month to month, until the Government got wind of what was brooding, and arrested the leaders of the military conspiracy in St. Petersburg, and then laid hands on many of their affiliated circles in the province, thus rendering any action impossible.

No one is to blame for these fatal procrastinations. It is such a tremendous responsibility to decide upon a premature insurrection, likely to serve as a good example, but doomed beforehand to failure and bloody suppression, when a short delay gives fair promise of a success.

Conspiracies are like games of chance, in which the keenest foresight is of no avail against the caprice of fortune.

The years 1882-3 present a series of attempts at readjusting the broken threads of conspiracies. But disasters, once begun, followed in rapid succession. About 250-300 officers of all arms were arrested all over the empire, one-third of them belonging to the garrison of St. Petersburg and Kronstadt. Most were young officers of the first three grades. But there were in their midst two colonels, two majors, and a score of captains and lieutenant-captains.

The military organization was broken, and the committee was not able to muster sufficient forces, even for a serious demonstration.

The year 1884, and the following ones, are those in which militant Nihilism passes through the most critical period of its existence. Conspiracies go on uninterruptedly, but they are so weak that they rarely ripen into actual attempts. Only on one occasion, namely, in March, 1887, the conspirators were able to come down into the streets with their bombs. The revolution has practically entered into a new phase.

XV.

MODERN OPPOSITION.

Is Russia ripe for political freedom? Do the Russian people want a representative Government, and are they enlightened enough to use parliamentary institutions properly if they get them? These are the fundamental questions which every thinking man, whether Russian or foreign, must decide for himself before he takes up any position or line of conduct in Russian politics.

It is evident that if Russia is not ripe for political freedom, it is sheer madness to attack autocracy, and idle sentimentalism to inveigh against the evils of a political system which is the only one possible for the country.

I expect the reader will not be surprised if I say that for thinking men in Russia the point is no longer open to question. But that it is so with foreigners, we have quite recently had innumerable proofs.

Alexander III.'s death made Russian internal affairs the topic of the day, and gave us the rare opportunity of hearing the opinions of hundreds of eminent men in this country. Now these intellectual statistics, thus gathered, have given us abundant proofs that with the majority of

English people the obstacle to their frank sympathy with the cause of Russian freedom lies precisely in the idea that Russia is not yet fit for a constitutional government.

The reasoning we find at the basis of this easy resignation is invariably this:—Autocracy exists in Russia, consequently it must suit her people, otherwise they would have changed it.

Yes, undoubtedly; in the long run, a country gets the government wanted by her people. But we must not forget that the process of readjustment is not everywhere equally easy and speedy. Where there are representative institutions, this readjustment is as effective as it is prompt, operating regularly and peacefully through the ballot-box. But the readjustment is slow and painful in countries where people have to send their votes by volleys of insurgents, by attacks of crowds of rebels, or by the bombs of conspirators.

It takes long to obtain such a vote, and to get it properly registered, and, what is worse, as time advances, the difficulties of the method increase, as well as the terrible expenditure of blood and human suffering necessary for this sort of electoral agitation.

It was comparatively easy for the English to wrest their freedom from their weak kings. The French had a harder struggle, but they were able to overcome them completely at one stroke, the forces of Louis XVI. being inferior to those of one single regiment of to-day, armed with modern weapons.

Neither the Austrians nor the Germans succeeded in 1848 in getting anything like the

French share of freedom, their struggle for political rights going on until now.

Needless to say how much more arduous is, in this respect, the position of Russia, which is the last comer in the struggle for the right of man.

Russian autocracy can make a much stronger resistance than any previous tyranny. This means that the Russian people must outgrow her Government much more completely than either Germany or France, before they can force it into harmony with their new wants and new aspirations.

The fact that autocracy exists is an obvious and unmistakable proof that the forces of the opposition are not yet strong enough to overcome it. If that is what is meant by those who speak of Russia not being "ripe" for freedom, they are certainly quite right. But we do not get much light upon the present condition of Russia or her future prospects by the restatement of such obvious and self-evident truths.

It seems to me that what the English want to know what stage autocracy is in, how far the organic growth of the country has prepared her for national self-government, independently of the unforeseeable chances of success.

Nobody will maintain that autocracy is in its heyday in Russia: the signs of bitter, fierce dissatisfaction are too many for that. But still there are people who suppose that it has taken deep root in the country, because the masses of the peasantry are supposed to be deeply monarchical and too ignorant to be able to appreciate and use free institutions.

There is a great eagerness for education among the Russian peasantry, which the Russian Government does its best to check. But there is as yet little book-lore among them.

Only one man out of ten can read, and only one boy out of fourteen can get admission to any school. But the unimpeachable evidence of statistics shows that in Austria, in 1863, fifteen years after the advent of constitutional *régime*, the percentage of illiterate people was exactly the same as in Russia of to-day.

The French peasants in 1789 were undoubtedly worse educated than those of modern Russia. So were the Italians in 1860. And it may be doubted whether the mass of the English were ahead of us in this respect in the time of the Commonwealth. One must not exaggerate the importance of book-lore. Deficiency in that does not mean stupidity or barbarism. Certain precepts and rules of life, evolved in a nation in the course of generations and transmitted from father to children, are much more important for the building up of a state than the power of reading a newspaper or cheap book or of writing a letter. Now, in this respect, the Russian peasants have been more favoured than the rural classes in many more advanced nations. They have had from time immemorial some experience of self-government, on a small scale, in their village communes, where all common affairs are managed by assemblies of all the householders.

In 1864, three years after the emancipation, being called to take part in self-government of

a higher order, the peasants gave proofs of their qualifications as citizens, which were as striking as the moderation and democratic tolerance exhibited on the same occasion by our upper classes.

Imagine the Virginian and Georgian slaves summoned to sit in some council side by side with their former masters, discussing and voting as their equals. What conflicts would it not lead to? In Russia they worked in perfect harmony, no disorder being ever recorded, the peasant deputies, after a very short time, fully entering into the spirit of their new functions.

Provinces like Viatka and Perm, where there was hardly any landed nobility, and where, consequently, the peasant delegates formed the majority, were among those where the zemstvos worked best.

These are conclusive facts. It would be absurd to pretend that our peasants have reached the high level of the Swiss, Norwegian, or American agricultural classes, or of the mass of English workmen. But it would be no exaggeration to say that, such as they are now, they are better prepared for a proper use of political freedom than the masses were in any of the great European countries at the time when their free institutions were started.

And what of their much talked of loyalty? What of their devotion to the Tzar?

The peasants have never been asked to express themselves on this delicate point. Count Tolstoi assures us that it is all twaddle. The peasants, he says, care for their cabbages more

than for their Tzar, and would prefer good land, with the Sultan to rule over them, to bad land with the White Tzar.

Leaving alone the Sultan, it is quite certain that the land and cabbages are at the bottom of this loyalty to the Tzar. Regardless of all proofs to the contrary, the peasant is firmly persuaded that the Tzar means to give him, some day, plenty of land and cabbages, and the best of everything, and that his land is held back from him only by the wicked officials.

Now this sort of monarchism is the political creed of the masses in all lands, not only before but long after the establishment of free governments.

The masses drop this creed when they cease to be the masses, by which I mean when there is no longer any distinction between the townspeople and country people.

People who are like children in their simplicity of mind and the vividness and freshness of their imaginations, must be children in their political conceptions as well. Peasants cannot understand, and nowhere do they understand, the complicated machinery of parliamentary governments, with its balance of power and their mutual checks. But the figure of a king, tzar, or emperor appeals to their fancy, to their minds, and to their hearts as well. The picturesque idea of personal power it conveys is invariably associated with that of benevolence. They cannot realize that a man having all power should not wish to do his people every good. These are the elements out of which the universal monarchical legend

is built up. It lingers in the rural districts of the constitutional monarchies of the Continent, such as Italy and Austria. The people there have been sending, for a generation or two, their deputies to parliament, yet still consider the King or Kaiser as their true friend, and look upon their representatives as a body of gentlemen of whom nobody knows exactly what they have in mind.

This legendary monarchism has not, in these cases, interfered with the working of parliamentary institutions, nor has it prevented the success of revolutions. The masses of the French people were deeply monarchical at the end of the last century, whilst monarchy was being demolished in their capital. Hardly different was the condition of England in the time of the Commonwealth.

Free political institutions have been through all the world the result of the work of the educated minorities. The people know very well the difference between a good and a bad government, because they feel it on their skins. But it has been for the educated minorities to devise and carry out a more satisfactory political system, as it is for the physician to offer a remedy for his patient's disease.

Thus the question whether Russia is ripe for political freedom is reduced to this: Whether her educated class, as a body, understands and cares for freedom, and whether they are able and willing to carry on a free government for the general good of the nation?

To put this question is to solve it. The educated class in Russia is counted nowadays

by millions, and, as far as knowledge and talent go, can hold its own by the side of the corresponding class of any other nation. In fact, this class makes Russia a European country. Our science, literature, periodical press, and our schools are European.

In the number of books published yearly, Russia stands third in the list of great European nations, being inferior, in this respect, only to France (11,000) and Germany (10,000), whilst surpassing Austria and Great Britain.

There are more solid works in Russia than in most other countries. Fiction and theology make a comparatively small item in our publishers' lists. As to Russian monthlies, numbering their readers by scores of thousands, they are true cyclopædias of varied knowledge. The proportion of people of a university education in our professional and literary class is greater than in any continental country except Germany.

There is an over-production of higher educated people, to use the expression of the reactionary press, which clamours for further restrictions of the right of admission to the universities on the ground that men of high culture, unable to find employment, naturally become disaffected.

Indeed, with the present misery of the people, hundreds of scientific agriculturists and technologists cannot find a use for their capacities, whilst agriculture is at the same stage as it was in the sixteenth century, and out of a hundred people who die, only four have medical attendance of any kind. But this fact speaks against

the system, and not against the Russian educated class.

Bureaucratic despotism has created an elaborate system of checks and barriers with the object of hindering the access of the educated class to the people as completely as possible, and even of excluding from them altogether that section which is likely to be most devoted to the people, and presumably more useful on account of its enthusiasm for democratic ideas. The privilege of serving the people is restricted to those whom property qualifications or ignorance have made selfish and narrow-minded. Only the richer section of the nobility are allowed to take part in the Zemstvos, or provincial councils; the poorer and more democratic, which is as a rule the better educated section of the nobility, is excluded. In municipal self-government a professor of a university has no voice in the elections, no matter how long he may have been a resident in the town, whilst every ignorant shop assistant is supposed to become a fully qualified voter the day after he takes his stand behind the counter. A well-educated man can never get a post as village schoolmaster or communal clerk, but it will be readily given to a retired soldier who can hardly spell.

Thus, leaving alone the question of the terrible havoc caused by the political persecutions among the best and ablest and most devoted friends of the people, we find that the laws are so framed as to utilize but a small part of the intellectual power and civic devotion of our educated class.

Yet if we take the work which this class has

been allowed to do in such unfavourable conditions in the Zemstvos, municipalities, statistical boards, relief committees, and societies of every description, and compare it with the work done by the bureaucracy, we shall find the idea of the usefulness of official tutorship simply preposterous. And besides, what is the bureaucracy, whose wisdom and spirit are to move the body of the nation? Is it not just one fraction of the educated class, and nowadays precisely the very worst fraction? There are, of course, many brilliant exceptions, but the average officials are proverbial for their inefficiency, gross ignorance, and corruption. Thus to choose between autocracy and constitutional government is to choose between entrusting the affairs of the country to the worst section of the educated class uncontrolled, or entrusting them to the picked men under the permanent control of the press, public opinion, the whole body of citizens.

It is hardly possible, even for a foreigner, to hesitate as to which side to take. But for a Russian, who knows what the difference really is, the very idea that such a dilemma may be seriously considered is an absurdity.

As long as serfdom was preserved, it might be urged that, whether made up from the best or worst elements, autocracy was the only form of government that was possible in Russia. Only an iron military despotism could keep law and order in a community composed of a handful of masters and millions of slaves, who were ready to fly at their throats at the first opportunity. The Decembrists, who attacked autocracy, arms in hand, in 1825, were right in plan-

ning a simultaneous liberation of the people from their masters, and of the country from the Tzars.

With the abolition of serfdom in 1861, the autocracy lost its *raison d'être*. Russia became a European country in her internal structure. She could be governed by European methods, and by this time the intellectual forces outside the official world were incomparably superior to those represented by bureaucracy. Alexander II. was successful in his reforms only because, and in so far as, he was willing to utilize forces outside the official world.

The country had outgrown the bureaucratic phase of progress, and would have walked much better on its own legs than on the straps held by the Government.

But its legs were fettered and it had to break the chains first. The attempt to do it by bombs and dynamite was made, as we have seen, at the close of the reign of Alexander II., when the exceedingly rapid internal progress in every direction made the deadly stagnancy of the political forms unendurable. The attempt failed, and autocracy under Alexander III. became more stringent than before. The internal culture, and with it the capacity and the desire for freedom, grew uninterruptedly and as rapidly as in the previous period. It was natural that under such conditions the form of the struggle should be changed. After the failure of the efforts resulting from the acuteness of the discontent, people began to think of utilizing the widespread disaffection.

The later phase of the revolutionary movement is characterized by its great moderation.

No single party has been formed that could speak for the whole body of revolutionists as the *Narodnaia Volia* did in 1879-83.

But all the more suggestive is the fact that all sections, large and small, into which the party divided, came to exactly the same conclusions and repeated the same demands almost word for word.

The secret printing offices never stopped their work in Russia. Over a score of them were discovered in the course of 1883-90, the whole staff being sent to the mines or to the Arctic region. But this dismemberment never prevented their being reconstructed over and over again. At any given moment two or three printing offices were at work in some corner of the capital or in some big provincial town. In 1883-4 there were six such printing offices, two in the capital and four in the provinces. Each of these printing presses was the centre of some independent organization, sometimes local, sometimes general, and its publications give a very clear idea of the prevailing tendencies of the revolutionary party.

Now if we look in their different publications we find that the dominant note in them is the desire to broaden the basis of the movement, and that they appeal to the whole of discontented educated Russia. Thus the St. Petersburg printing press, which was discovered by the police in 1883, published the speech of the well-known barrister, Plevako, suppressed by the Government on account of its constitutional demands, but which contained no revolutionary matter. In the December of the same year a body of Moderate Liberals drew up a statement

of their views and demands, which did not go beyond a chamber of deputies, with advisory powers only. The printing press of the revolutionists took the risk of publishing this piece of milk and water liberalism, and in the next issue of the *Narodnaia Volia*, the editors, although expressing their disagreement with the proclamation, spoke of it sympathetically as an important sign of the times.

In 1884 another printing office, founded by Sophia Sladkova, published the manifesto of the "League of Youth," which, although socialistic in its ultimate objects, declares itself in favour of constitutional reform and educational work as the means by which the object will be obtained. Similar is the tone of the pamphlet issued by the Kharkov Printing Office, founded by the agrarian Socialists (the Land Partition party). It was discovered, owing to the treason of a certain Shkriaba, who was in consequence promptly killed by the revolutionists. But the idea of a peaceful Socialist propaganda was taken up by the Moscow Printing Press, which issued an organ called *The Union*, and a number of socialist pamphlets. The printing offices founded by the remnant of the *Narodnaia Volia* party at the two extremities of the Empire—in Dorpat and in Rostov, upon the Don, emphasize still more this turning point in the policy of the revolutionary party. The following year, 1885, the movement became more accentuated, as the *Labour Gazette* shows, issued by the new secret printing office of St. Petersburg, and the *Narodnaia Volia*, which had to found a new printing press in Taganrog.

One more illustration to prove the generality of their current of ideas. In 1887 the Russian revolutionists resolved to have a paper edited in St. Petersburg, but published in Switzerland, in order to avoid the danger of detection. The scheme could not be successful, as no paper could stand such a long distance between the editorial and the printing department. Two numbers only of this paper, bearing the characteristic name of *Self-government*, appeared in Geneva; the first contained the programme of the paper and a number of letters from political refugees, representing almost all sections and divisions of this rather disunited body. There is in this paper a letter from Debagory Mokrievich, one of the most active and gifted among Southern revolutionists. There are also letters from Dobrovolsky, a former medical officer of the Zemstvos, who sacrificed his situation and a good career for the sake of Socialist propaganda, and who had after his acquittal to escape abroad to avoid exile to Siberia; the famous Vera Zassulich, Axelrod, and the brilliant and erudite Plekhanov, who stand for the Russian social democracy; Professor Dragomanov, the leader of the Southern Russian Nationalist and Socialist movement, and many others, including the author of this book. A motley crowd it may seem, but not to one who peruses the statement of their views, because they are all agreed and united upon the point of a moderate political reform as the immediate step to be taken to give the Russian people the means of developing peacefully and organically in the direction best suited to them.

But under this broad and general movement we notice an undercurrent of extreme tendencies, which remind us of the epoch of the terrorist struggle. The dynamite manufacturers are not so numerous as the printing offices, but they are there nevertheless to repeat their *memento mori* to the tyranny above.

As early as the autumn of 1884 a dynamite workshop was discovered in the province of the Cossacks of the Don (Lugansky). In 1886 another dynamite factory was at work in the same region. In 1887 an attempt was made to blow up the Tzar with dynamite bombs on the anniversary of the death of Alexander II., when the Tzar goes invariably to a funeral mass at the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul. Though ably conceived, the bombs being made in the shape of books, which the conspirators held under their armpits, the attempt failed. The missiles were so badly manufactured that they did not explode. But very soon a marked improvement was made in that direction. In Zurich a company of revolutionists brought the manufacture of bombs almost to perfection, reducing them to the size of a watch without any decrease in their deadly effect. By an unexpected explosion the chief inventor and maker, Brinstein (Demba), was killed and his colleague wounded. Arrests followed, and the factory was moved to Paris. From there a girl, Sophia Gunsburg, was sent over to Russia to introduce the perfected weapon. But she was arrested, and the plan had to be abandoned because the French police arrested the conspirators before anything could be done. A new

dynamite factory was founded in 1891 by Manzevich, who was arrested and locked up for life in Schlusselbourg by "administrative orders." But the seeds of dynamite seems to have taken root in the soil, for its deadly fruit reappears on the surface over and over again. Dynamite factories can no longer be extirpated, and every now and then the police discover proofs of fresh attempts to make practical use of the stuff manufactured by them. The attempt to blow up the Tzar at the Smolensk military manœuvre in 1893 seems to have been much more serious than that of March 13th, 1887. The new number of *Narodnaia Volia*, which appeared in 1893, gave expression to this newly awakened spirit of revenge and retaliation; the spectre of terrorism reappears in it once again.

XVI.

THE NEW REIGN.

ONE often hears worthy persons with sympathetic pity say, that of the hundred and ten millions of inhabitants of Russia, the Tzar is the one whose life is perhaps the least enviable. There is something in that, undoubtedly. The sort of existence which Alexander II. prepared for himself during the last years of his reign, and Alexander III. throughout the whole of his, was by no means to be envied. This one must admit. But there is no denying that fortune was particularly propitious to the young heir of their greatness, in creating for him an altogether exceptional position, which any ruler might envy. Together with uncontested power, he received the opportunity of accomplishing great things for the benefit of his country, with very little trouble to himself, and without the slightest damage to what is called the imperial prestige, or, to speak more correctly, the petty conceit and vanity of royalty. The unfortunate Alexander II., who started with the great idea of reform, had not the courage to carry out his mission to its logical end. He stopped short after a few years and began to undo his own work. When, after fifteen years of relentless reaction, the Russian people lost all patience and all confidence in

him, and the terrorist outbreaks occurred, to have recognized his error and to have granted a constitution then would have been to yield to reason supported by force. His pride rebelled against such a course, and he tried to put down the opposition, violent and peaceful alike, with the result that everybody knows. Alexander III. had a terrible legacy of blood and revenge left to him; and for him to abandon the path of reaction, and brave the suspicion that he was influenced by fear, would have required an unusual amount of moral courage, even supposing he had had sufficient independence and energy of mind to strike out a way for himself.

The position of the present Tzar is altogether different. He has no old account to settle, no obligation to exhibit fortitude. His hands are free, and will remain so for some time. No one could suspect that any concessions on his part were due to anything but his own spontaneous impulse to do good to his country. And at the time of his accession to the throne he was the object of that general feeling of goodwill and conciliatory forbearance, which facilitates the most difficult measures in practical politics, and goes half-way to ensure their success.

Before his accession to the throne, Nicholas II. attracted remarkably little attention. He was so young. The Tzar, Alexander III., seemed to be in excellent health, and the question of succession seemed so remote. People hardly distinguished the Tzarevich from the host of shadowy grand dukes. No opinions, no leanings to one party or another were attributed to him. The circle in which he

moved was quite colourless. Of the little body of young aristocrats who surrounded him in the quality of friends, not a single one was mentioned as a man of ability. In fact, they effaced themselves later on, leaving the young Tzar in the hands of his father's old advisers. And the Tzarevich himself did not strike anyone as a man in any way brilliant. His former teachers were not over enthusiastic about his natural gifts. Those who had the opportunity of meeting him at his first public appearance, i.e. during his journey round the globe, through Egypt, India, Japan, and Siberia, and at different courts of Europe, were similarly impressed by him. A very haughty, rough demeanour to inferiors and those who ministered to his comforts distinguished him unfavourably from the members of other reigning houses, with whom personal courtesy is a common characteristic. Love of pleasure, and an amazing ignorance, may be added as another trait in this vague sketch. On seeing the distillation of sea-water on a steamer, he asked what was the object of the operation, and wanted to know whether the sea-salt would not evaporate, and pass into the refrigerator with the steam.

As chairman of the famine relief committee, in 1891, he did nothing deserving of any attention, and showed a marked aversion to public business, i.e. to the reading and signing of reports and other official documents—a trait which was rather promising than otherwise in the son of his father. But it is impossible to make any forecast about a ruler from what he has been as a ruler in *spe*, especially in Russia,

where it is not only improper, but even a little risky for the heir to the throne to make himself conspicuous, and assert his individuality in any way. It is well known that to dispel the suspicions of his father, Alexander II., as heir apparent, had to assume up to the age of thirty-six a mask of conservative apathy and indifference to public affairs which he was far from feeling at that time. When later on, his own heir, the future Alexander III., showed in private his leaning toward Slavophilism, his purely personal relations with Aksakov were interpreted as political conspiracies. He was put under police *surveillance*, and his private correspondence was opened like that of a suspected Nihilist.

We may assume that for the present Tzar this policy of self-effacement could not have cost no great effort: at his age few men of his station had much individuality to show, either in views or character. But the Russian public was, so far, unaware of the fact, or, if aware of it, indifferent on the subject. He was young, and the faith which men have in the generosity, unselfishness, and purity of youth, went to swell that wave of hope and warm confidence which greeted his accession to the throne. In one night Russia seemed to have grown young again.

The pent-up rancour and spirit of revenge which had been accumulated by the horrors of the past reign, the fierce and gloomy despair which was ready to break out in new deeds of blood, were suddenly transformed into joyful, confident hope—as a gathering storm is sometimes dissolved into a warm, beneficent summer rain. The extreme, or, to be more accurate,

the more consistent and logical section of the opposition, upon whom the experience of the past was not lost, knew very well that it was childish to expect any concession without corresponding pressure. Yet even they looked hopefully into the future, expecting that the new government of so young a man being weaker than the preceding one, the amount of pressure necessary to produce the desired effect might be smaller and less violent. But with the bulk of society this flood of hopefulness came from a rush of sudden faith in the personality of the young Tzar, in his good intentions, his true, genuine love for his country. It is interesting that it was the *Novoe Vremya*—the most cynically reactionary and wide-awake of all Russian papers—that expressed most forcibly the dominant feeling of the moment.

"Russia looks hopefully upon her new sovereign. He is young—but youth is not a defect. Youth is generous, and so little is needed to give happiness to our long-suffering country."

In fact, very little would have pacified Russia. The more far-sighted section of the opposition put forward the demand for a constitution, such as we see in the rest of Europe. But the bulk of the Liberal party did not ask even that little. From the utterances of the Liberal press, and from the statements of the representative bodies which had the courage to express their opinions, and from other information and indications, we may gather that the bulk of the Liberal opposition has been, and is willing to compromise upon a Chamber of Deputies, with powers of advising only.

To show how exceedingly (one may say how excessively) moderate such a demand is, it is enough to mention that there is, and has been for half a century, a body which had such a counselling and deliberative voice in legislation—the so-called Council of State (Gossudarstvenny Sovet), which transacts all the legislative work. The Ministers smuggle in some laws of their own making, by means of circulars having the force of law, or by their obligatory "comments" on laws which sometimes are in flagrant contradiction to the law commented upon. But as a rule, every project of new law, after being drawn up in the corresponding ministerial department, is laid before the Council of the State, which discusses it, proposes amendments, and passes a resolution for or against the project, the Tzar having the option of sanctioning the view of the majority or the minority, after which the project becomes law.

The crazy Paul I. alone wrote his silly laws himself, without consulting anyone. All the other Tzars had the good sense never to make full use of their discretionary power of legislating. The Tzars do sometimes initiate new laws by giving an order to the corresponding Minister, but before being promulgated, they invariably pass through some deliberative body—the Council of the State—Gossudarstvenny Sovet—as a general rule, or the Council of Ministers in exceptional cases.

An assembly of representatives of the people, with powers of advising, would simply mean a change in the *personnel* of the State Council.

Instead of being nominated by the Tzar, these experts in legislative matters would be sent in by the nation. It is obvious that such a reform would not be sufficient to guarantee to the nation the management of her own affairs. But it was not for the autocrat to resent such an insufficiency; and the smaller the demands, the less reason there was to anticipate resistance. It is so pleasant to dream of easy, heaven-sent gifts—and for two months Russian public revelled in rosy dreams.

Every act of the new Tzar was watched with breathless attention, and the most favourable interpretation was put on it. There was a tacit conspiracy of praise and encouragement. The Russian people condoned the young Tzar's first manifesto, announcing his accession to the throne of his forefathers, and declaring that Russia's greatness depended upon implicit devotion and obedience to him. This was rather presumptuous on the part of a young man of twenty-six, but the sponge was passed over it, people accepting such utterances as a tribute to routine, and waiting with the same hopeful, benevolent indulgence for some sign to come.

Two insignificant concessions made in the first days of the new reign, served to keep alive hopes which were the sickly offspring of lazy optimism. In the controversy between the Poles and the Governor-General, the coarse cavalry sergeant Gurko, the young Tzar sided with the former. He condescended to permit his Polish subjects to take their oath of allegiance in their own language, and not in the official Russian, which they did not understand.

The offended general sent in his resignation, which was accepted. For this little concession the Poles received Gurko's successor, General Orzevsky, with something like an ovation, and on December 6th, the Tzar's name day, Warsaw was brilliantly illuminated by the Poles without any compulsion on the part of the police. No Tzar had ever been so honoured by the citizens of the proud Polish capital. Certainly Nicholas II. could not complain of lack of sympathetic encouragement.

The Finnish controversy was somewhat more serious, and the young Tzar appears in it in a favourable light, showing a capacity for listening to reason and admitting his errors, which is very uncommon in kings and emperors.

In the first manifesto of the Tzar, announcing his assumption of the crown of the Russian Empire and of the grand Duchy of Finland, the latter was mentioned as "indissolubly united" to Russia, whilst the Finns consider their country to be quite apart from the rest of the Empire, the two crowns only being united on the same head. Besides, as constitutional sovereigns of Finland, the Tzars, at their accession to the throne, were expected to sign the promise to adhere to the constitution of the Grand Duchy, after which the Finns took their oath of allegiance. Nicholas II. omitted to comply with this rule, which greatly alarmed the Finns. In view of the attacks upon their constitution, which had marked the last year of the preceding reign, they very rightly considered the conduct of the young Tzar as a very bad omen, and resolved to make a stand for

their ancient liberties. By common agreement they put off taking the oath of allegiance, sending their official representative, the Secretary of State, General Denn, to Livadia to remonstrate with the new Tzar, and to obtain his signature to the Promissory Act. For seven days Finland was in a state of great suspense, until a telegram was received from General Denn, announcing that the young Tzar had signed the Promissory Act, and ordered the error of his first manifesto to be set right, after which the oath of allegiance was taken all over the country.

As a set-off against these two facts, the dismissal of General Gurko and the acceptance of Finnish remonstrances, which were to the young Tzar's credit, there were a number of other facts which told in the opposite direction. Stringent decrees against the Stundists and the Jews were issued a few days after the manifesto by which Nicholas II. announced his accession to the throne. The censorship was as relentless as before, and police raids, with their invariable sequel—arrests, imprisonment, exile —were more fierce and indiscriminating than ever. The balance between debit and credit was much against the prospects of the new reign. But the public would not make any such balance. All that was bad was put down to officials, whilst all that showed a shadow of progressive tendencies was hailed as a ray of sunshine on a gloomy day.

The grounds for such enthusiasm were so exceedingly poor that one cannot help suspecting that it was not altogether genuine. Worthy persons hoped that the young Tzar could be

carried away by dint of praises. The taste for popularity grows, and he might wish to gain more of the praise which had been so profusely lavished upon him on credit, and might come to believe himself to be what men assured him that he was. Nurses sometimes use this trick with naughty children, telling them they are good boys, till they get them to behave as such.

But this simple-minded device did not prove successful in its new application. The young Tzar either took the praises literally as his desert, or was naturally destitute of those imaginative qualities which would have allowed him to develop the taste for popularity.

On his return from Livadia he seemed to be under good control, never committing any act that might "cause a dangerous excitement of public opinion," to use the favourite expression of the censorship. The old gang gained complete possession of him, and the internal policy seemed gradually to slide into the old groove. All ministers of the former reign were kept in office except Krivoshein, who lost his post through his clumsiness in the embezzlement of public money. Durnavo, the minister of the interior, got so far reassured that, at a private interview with the editors of the chief papers of the capital, he was bold enough to affirm that no change whatever was to be expected, and that everything would remain exactly as before. So it seemed in fact. But the young Tzar did not show his hand, and people waited and hoped for a sign.

The marriage of the young Tzar with Princess Alix had to take place within a few weeks.

People waited anxiously for this event, because it was bound to draw the Tzar from his reserve. The manifestoes which are invariably issued on such occasions, though essentially non-political, always show the political tendency prevailing in high quarters. The golden document, the cornucopia of graces, came in due time. The foreign press, through inertia following the earlier impulse, greeted it as an act of supreme clemency such as Russia had not seen for half a century. But the Russians themselves knew better. With the best wishes they could not keep up any illusion as to the nature of this manifesto. The peasants got their usual condonation of arrears, that could not be collected, and old debts to the state, which could not be recovered. Otherwise the manifesto was the stingiest and meanest thing of the kind that had been issued for a long time. Thieves, burglars, depredators of public funds were the only people for whom the young sovereign kept a corner in his heart. As to offences committed as a protest against the prevailing oppression or intolerance, they were either overlooked and ignored or dealt with in such a spirit of petty rancour and spitefulness as fully to confirm the opinion of some English papers, that this document was something altogether exceptional. Not a ray of hope for the many hundreds of men who were suffering for their religious opinions. Not a word as to offenders against the press regulations, who are everywhere the first to benefit by any amnesty.

The Poles, the traditional victims of Russian Tzars, were remembered indeed, but only to be

made the object of a practical joke. Those who had taken part in the insurrection of thirty-two years ago, who still remained in Siberia, were allowed to return and settle *everywhere*, except in those places where the Minister of the Interior should consider their presence dangerous to public order. This meant, of course, Poland. Thus it was with the Minister of the Interior that the decision as to the amnesty granted to Poles finally rested.

As regards political offenders in general, only one category of "criminals" received a real amnesty, —those who fell under the Article 447 of the Penal Code. But if we look up this Article, we find that it refers to offences which it is a shame to consider offences at all, namely, the "offences against the portraits, statues, or busts of the Tzar or members of his family," i.e. damaging or destroying the sacred images; and also to "disrespectful and offensive words" about the Emperor or his family, "pronounced without any intention to excite disrespect to the sacred person of the Emperor," i.e. in a state of drunkenness or in a moment of excitement, when some people will find relief in senseless swearing.

The real political offenders are dealt with in a manner which is both insulting and cowardly. Nothing is given without some mean subterfuge allowing the Administration to take it away. The lightening of the penalties of prisoners or Siberian exiles is made conditional upon their good behaviour, which means that they are put entirely at the mercy of the Minister and the Administration. With reference to political offenders, bad behaviour means faithfulness to

the principles for which they are suffering—often simply a dignified attitude of reserve.

This mean-spirited cautiousness is still more apparent in the paragraph referring to political refugees. They are graciously allowed to petition the Minister of the Interior for permission to return to their country, on condition of their being willing "to atone for their past crimes by sincere repentance and fidelity to the throne." This does not exactly sound like clemency or grace. The right of recanting has never been denied to political offenders, and the renegades have at all times been received with open arms by the Government.

I have only to mention the case of Lev Tikhomirov, who, having repudiated his former creed, received free pardon from Alexander III., although he was a member of the committee which condemned Alexander II. to death. Several men of less prominence, who have followed Tikhomirov's example, have been all pardoned and allowed to return. And here again we see, in the manifesto of Nicholas II., a clause which elevates the bureaucracy to a higher place than it held before. With regard to refugees as with regard to the Poles, the Minister of the Interior is made the dispenser and controller of the Tzar's privilege of mercy, which was never officially relinquished by any of Nicholas II.'s predecessors.

According to the strict terms of the manifesto, the Minister of the Interior has the option of submitting to the Tzar or not the petitions of the repentant refugees; he is "permitted" to

accept such petitions, and pass them on in due course. Now what is "permitted," is, *ipso facto*, optional.

Of course, we do not mean in the least to blame the young Tzar for any obstacle he puts in the way of renegades. We mention this point only as another indication of the greater ascendancy of bureaucracy, to which the new Tzar shows himself so yielding.

One more curious detail. The Minister of the Interior has not full discretion in the matter; the manifesto puts one restriction on him: he is prohibited from forwarding to the Tzar the petitions of refugees whose offences fall under Section 249 of the Penal Code.

One would think that these must be the tzaricides, and worse. But if we look into the Article in question, we find that it practically covers the whole ground of political offences.

Here is the famous Article, which has been referred to constantly for the last fifteen years. "For rebellion against the supreme authority, i.e. for an open insurrection and conspiracy against the Tzar and the State, as well as for the intention to overthrow the Government in the whole Empire, or a part thereof, or to *change the system of government* . . . . all the promoters, inciters, associates, and abettors, are subjected to the penalty of death; those who knew of the criminal preparations, and having the possibility of informing the authorities of them, have not done so, being liable to the same penalty."

It is clear that any participation in revolutionary conspiracy is covered by this paragraph;

and in fact, since 1879, i.e. since the Revolutionary Party included in its programme the overthrow of autocracy, all revolutionists have been indicted on the strength of this terrible 249th paragraph. All were declared by the Imperial Prosecutor worthy of death, and any mitigation of their penalties was represented as a peculiar act of mercy.

The mention of this paragraph in the manifesto makes it a piece of buffoonery, and we are led to conclude that either the young Tzar has been fooling the simple public, or that he has been fooled, and has put his name to the first great document of his reign without taking the trouble to understand clearly what was behind its clumsy paragraphs.

If the section referring to political offenders is interesting as throwing a sidelight on the Tzar's bend of mind, the section dealing with the exile system has a wider bearing, because it foreshadows a whole system of policy.

No interior peace, no justice, no civil guarantees, no abatement of bureaucratic tyranny is to be thought of as long as the system of exile by administrative order is maintained.

Now there is no doubt possible as to that. Administrative exile is mentioned throughout the manifesto as something unquestionable, forming an integral part of the system of government.

The victims of administrative tyranny have fared even worse than the victims of judicial subserviency. Political offenders who have been tried and sentenced, have had their penalties commuted, except in cases where the adminis-

tration chose to interfere. Administrative exiles had no alleviation of their suffering, except in the cases where the Administration was pleased to pronounce in their favour.

After the publication of the manifesto of January 26th, any unprejudiced man could see clearly that there was no hope of voluntary concessions from the new reign. But the Russian public has, to an unusual degree, the capacity of hoping against hope, and the great solemnities of the Court, such as marriages, coronations, and the like, afford an opportunity for exhibiting this amiable characteristic.

Disappointed by the marriage manifesto, they would have fixed their hopes upon the coronation; but here something unexpected occurred; the young Tzar stepped himself from the clouds of the bureaucratic Olympus, and made a statement so plain and unequivocal as to render any further illusion impossible.

Our great satirist, Shtchedrin, makes one of his heroes regret that he is not a dumb animal, an ox for example, because no man can feel safe in Russia, no matter what one says; any speech may be misinterpreted by spies, and lead the speaker into trouble. Whilst if one were merely bellowing, what could the cleverest spies make out of it?

For the Tzar, too, it would be much pleasanter if his subjects could only bellow. As they have the gift of speech without the right to use it—or as Mme. Novikov puts it, as they enjoy perfect freedom of opinion without the right of giving it utterance—very untoward incidents will sometimes happen. They are

expected to speak, and must speak, on certain great occasions, because a solemn ceremony in dumb show would be too monotonous. Naturally enough, objectionable opinions will find articulate expression every now and then. That is just what the young Tzar learnt to his cost.

In reply to the first manifesto of the Tzar, the one announcing his accession to the throne and his future marriage, the different provinces of the Empire sent in deputations to the capital to congratulate him on these two events. Several Zemstvos took this opportunity to express to the young sovereign the true feelings and wishes of the country. These were the Zemstvos of Tver, Tchernigov, etc. To show the nature of these extremely moderate demands, it will suffice to quote the address of the Zemstvo of Tver, which was the most outspoken and dignified. Here it is, in a slightly condensed form :—

"Your Majesty,—In the solemn days of the beginning of your service to the Russian people, the Zemstvo of Tver greets you with the greeting of faithful subjects. . . . Together with the whole of Russia we have listened to the significant words by which your Majesty has announced your accession to the Russian throne. We are filled with gratitude for your resolution to devote yourself to the happiness of your people, and we hope for the success of the great task you have put before yourself. We trust that the voice of the people's needs will be always heard on the height of the throne. We trust

that our prosperity will grow together with the unflinching obedience to law both on the part of the people and of the Administration; because the law, expressing in Russia the will of the monarch, must stand above the changeful views of the individual agents of that supreme authority. We earnestly hope that the rights of individual citizens as well as of the corporations will be protected. We expect, Sire, that public bodies and corporations will have the possibility and the right of expressing their opinions upon questions concerning them, in order that the monarch may be able to hear the views and the desires not only of the Administration, but of the Russian people as well. We believe that in a closer intercourse with the representatives of all classes of the Russian people, who are equally devoted to the throne and the country, the authority of your Majesty will find a new source of strength and a pledge of success for your generous intentions."

The address of the Zemstvo of Tula is, we will not say more moderate, because it is difficult to be more moderate than the representatives of Tver, but it is couched in terms so obsequious that only the sensitive ear of a Russian can detect in it the spark of opposition. After reiterated expressions of devotion and loyalty, the Zemstvo of Tula is bold enough to say:—

"As men standing very close to the people, we have a strong belief that local needs can be satisfied only through representatives of local interests, and we beg our Tzar to have confidence in us, which is a necessary condition

for fruitful service to the country. We beg for a free access for the voices of the Zemstvos to the throne."

These quotations are fair samples from the bulk. Certainly no despot has been approached by his dissatisfied subjects in so conciliatory a spirit.

Before submitting these addresses to the Emperor, all the deputations had to hand them over to the Minister of the Interior, who had to decide whether they were fit to be presented to the Tzar. The addresses of the liberal Zemstvos were declared unfit for presentation, and the deputies of the Zemstvo of Tver were deprived by the Minister of the "happiness" of appearing before the Tzar. Of course the Tzar was informed of the transgression of the liberal Zemstvos, and had time to think it over and prepare his reply, which we are therefore bound to consider as the deliberate statement of his views. This reply is well known to the whole of the English public, upon whom it fell like a bucket of cold water. Here is this important speech, which I translate in full. Whatever else it may lack, it has certainly the merit of brevity:—

"I rejoice to see gathered here representatives of all estates of the realm, who have come to give expression to their sentiments of loyal allegiance. I believe in the sincerity of these feelings, which have been those of every Russian from time immemorial. But it has come to my knowledge that latterly, in some meetings of the Zemstvos, voices have made themselves heard from people who have allowed themselves

to be carried away by foolish fancies about the participation of representatives of the Zemstvos in the general administration of the internal affairs of the State. Let all know that I devote all my strength to the good of my people, but that I shall uphold the principle of autocracy as firmly and unflinchingly as did my ever-lamented father."

The official papers reported that the speech was received with enthusiastic cheers. But it was not so. An eye-witness tells us that there was much cheering at the opening of the speech, but its concluding words were received in dead silence. On the next day at the thanksgiving Mass, which had been arranged beforehand, out of 600 delegates only 30 were present. Those of the correspondents of the foreign press, German and English, who write from the spot, have all reported that the Tzar's speech caused great dissatisfaction. Even the Russian papers, gagged as they are by the censorship, bear unmistakable signs of a revulsion of public opinion in Russia. It could not be otherwise; for, apart from its substance, the form alone of the Tzar's speech was bound to produce the worst possible impression. Politeness is the supreme law among educated people, no matter what their station, and people could not help being hurt by the rudeness of a man, who, whatever else he may be, is a mere stripling of no experience compared with the elderly people, marshals of nobility, ancient judges, and presidents of the Zemstvos, whom he chose to treat as if they were schoolboys.

Politically, the speech of January 17th marks

an epoch in the history of our opposition movement. Hitherto the Government had pretended that only outlaws, madcaps of revolutionists, socialists, and other disreputable persons were clamouring for the reform of our political system. Nicholas II. was the first to say publicly that the country, through its accredited representatives, was asking him for constitutional reform, and he, the Tzar, was refusing to accede to its demands, and meant to refuse as long as he could.

The internal policy of the new reign, which had been up to then a blank, was defined by the Tzar's speech to the Zemstvos: it would be preposterous to say once for all, but certainly for some time to come. The honeymoon of the new reign ended on January 17th. The Tzar and the country stand face to face as enemies. The nation has made to Nicholas II. a proposal of peace, and he would not have it, choosing war.

But what is the reason of this reckless stubbornness? the English reader will ask. In our sceptical age men are suspicious of everything that may be called transcendental: transcendental virtue or vice, transcendental wisdom or foolishness. It seems incredible that a man in his senses should deliberately sit upon the safety-valve, knowing full well that an explosion must follow sooner or later, whilst he has in his hand a key to turn the tap and let off the dangerous steam.

Such dense self-destructive stupidity seems inconceivable. Hence the conclusion that for some reason or other the Tzar cannot re-mould

the political organization of which he is the official head; for he would have certainly re-moulded it if he could.

The reasoning is perfectly correct in a sense. There must be something insuperable which stands in the way of the Tzar becoming the reformer of the political system of Russia. The question which Englishmen are asking is, What is it?

Fancy is the quickest and the most obliging of our faculties, being always ready to fill in irritating gaps in our understanding; and fancy makes naturally for the sensational and striking.

Resting for a while its wondering gaze on the mightiest potentate of the world, who at the same time seems to be the most helpless of human beings, fancy very simply solves the riddle of the combination of power and weakness which it sees in him.

The Nihilists are urging the Tzar by their drastic arguments to liberal reforms, which seem desirable and likely to be beneficial all round. There must be in Russia at the Tzar's elbow another party as violent and extreme as the Nihilists, which pushes him in the opposite direction, and is, if pushed to the wall, ready to use the same means of intimidation as the Nihilists. Between the two fires the Tzar is unable to make his choice, and has no alternative but to tremble and maintain the *status quo*.

One constantly hears such surmises, in public meetings and in private, whenever Russian affairs are being discussed. These mysterious

champions of reaction are called sometimes the Aristocratic Party, sometimes the Old Slavophils; but oftener, to enhance the mystery, they are left without any name. This is certainly the best plan. But we may do more; we may dismiss these bugbears altogether, for they do not exist at all. Every Russian of any education will say the same.

There is no Aristocratic Party in Russia, for the simple reason that in our country there is no aristocracy, in the scientific, historical sense of the word, the handful of people calling themselves aristocrats being only a class who have for several generations enjoyed certain privileges granted to them by the Crown at the expense of the people.

Of the Slavophils it is impossible to speak seriously. One smaller section of them, which is hardly represented nowadays, is a body of scholars and philosophers, who have not even that power which masterly word and thought give to men over their contemporaries. The other, bigger, section is entirely merged in the bureaucracy, representing in it certain ambitious and grasping tendencies of autocracy.

The only body of people in Russia that count in internal politics is the bureaucracy, the legions of officials who, although dependent individually and collectively upon the will of the Tzar, yet, owing to their number, and the impossibility of effective control, can thwart and nullify every order of their master, if they are so minded. But there is no cohesion, no feeling of solidarity among them. They will

never openly rebel, never go on strike, or so much as show displeasure at any order given to them. Their resistance is passive, silent, submissive, but insuperable, because organic, as the result of certain constitutional qualities, traditions, and habits, which have become its second nature.

A Tzar trying to re-mould the state through bureaucracy is in the position of a man trying to lift up the stool upon which he is sitting. But there is nothing to prevent him from stepping upon the firm ground and finding a new point of support. The story of the greatest reform initiated by autocracy—the emancipation of the serfs—may serve as proof and illustration.

Nicholas I. was a sincere abolitionist, and as early as 1826 he made up his mind to emancipate the serfs. But being a blind adherent of the bureaucratic system, he entrusted the elaboration of an emancipation law to a commission of officials, who, as serf-owners, were naturally hostile to the measure. Whilst affecting complete obedience to the orders of the Tzar, they succeeded, by simple procrastination, in completely frustrating his intentions. For twenty whole years the commission was sitting, collecting materials, accumulating volumes in the archives, and not advancing one step; so that at the death of Nicholas I. the question was precisely at the same point as at his accession to the throne.

When Alexander II. resolved to carry out the same reform, the bureaucracy, as a body, was as hostile to it as the planters of the

Southern States to the abolitionist plans of President Lincoln, and for the same reasons. But they never thought of disobeying the Tzar's orders, and they were not able to strangle the project in red tape, because this time the Tzar departed from the bureaucratic routine, and invited the co-operation of the vital forces of the country, the press, and public opinion, which rendered the carrying out of the reform possible, and would have improved it, and changed the face of the country, if he had not very soon after relapsed into his father's ways.

Suppose the Tzar had made up his mind to give Russia a constitution, there would have been no power to compel him to deviate from his resolution. The reactionary party at the Court, and the ministers who had thrown in their lot indissolubly with reaction, would have moved heaven and earth to bring all sorts of underhand pressure to bear upon him; they would have tried to frighten him with all sorts of imaginary dangers. But it would never occur to them to take any step actually forcing the Tzar's hand, or to so much as assume an attitude of open hostility or opposition.

The Shah of Persia and the Sultan of Turkey are more likely to meet with open opposition at their Court than the Tzar of Russia. Religious fanaticism can push people to rash steps, but courtiers' calculations cannot. Besides, as regards constitutional reform, the Court and the higher bureaucracy will be a house divided in itself. The light of culture has done its work, even in these benighted spheres, and there are nowadays many partisans of consti-

As autocracy has undoubtedly rendered great services to the country in the past, it is very easy, for one so disposed, to persuade himself, by a slight effort of imagination, that it will do so in the present.

In one point, namely, in the aggrandizement of the State, autocracy really has the advantage over all other forms of government. A free Russia will be stronger in the interior. But no constitutional state can be so successful as autocracy in the work of conquest and annexation, because the vital forces and resources of the nation will be devoted to interior development. Foreign politics recede into the background with the growth of civil and political freedom, whilst it is the main prop of autocracies.

The official apologists for autocracy have advanced the plea that it is necessary for the preservation of the unity of the Empire. This is sheer nonsense, because the Russia of the Russians is a homogeneous organically united country, which cannot fall to pieces any more than the United States of America. Poland and Finland are not Russia. If, which is not likely, they prefer a separate existence as petty States to the advantage of a free political and economic union with a country like Russia, and secede, Russia will not be the loser by it. But for the further extension of the State in all directions, the maintenance of autocracy is undoubtedly necessary. And when will that process stop? Jingoism is insatiable.

The recent Japanese war has revealed the ambition of the Russian Government for su-

premacy in the far East, which had hitherto been concealed. It wants Manjuria and Corea, Port Arthur and what not for itself; to secure that end autocracy would not allow the Japanese to snatch the prey from her.

The Armenian scare has brought proof as evident of the covetousness of the Tzar's Russia in another direction. The Russian diplomatists would on no account consent to Armenian autonomy, because an independent Armenia, like the independent Bulgaria, would be a barrier to Russian extension; whilst an enslaved Armenia is sure to seek refuge from the horrors of Turkish rule under the sceptre of the White Tzar, and will, like the golden apple, fall sooner or later into his lap. This would give him the strategical key to dominion over the two seas, and transform both Asia Minor and Persia into Russian dependencies. And when the Russian frontier is "rounded" in those directions, will the "nationalist" ambition be satisfied? Will it not be too tempting to stretch the Russian frontier, and to extend the Russian markets to the strip of land now ruled by the Ameers, and then to leap over into the huge country of untold riches, defended only by seventy thousand soldiers? It will seem a defenceless prey to a commander of an army of four million men, which by that time will have grown to seven or eight.

Europe will never become Cossack, as Napoleon prophesied, the superiority of European culture being an insuperable obstacle to it. But the advantage is entirely

on Russia's side in Asia, and there is no limit to her expansion in that direction. The late Count Von Moltke said that Russia may conquer, some day, the whole of Asia, except India. But his book was written some fifty years ago, when the enormous military advantages of countries which have introduced universal conscription could not be foreseen. Would he maintain the same exception now? Or, what is more to the point, would Russian "Jingoes" necessarily endorse it?

Now there is so much of the brutal instincts of savages left in the common herd of men, that thousands of them will sell their birthright of freedom for the sake of the purely platonic enjoyment of the idea that their country is trampling on other nations, and crushing them to dust. That is why autocrats seek to surround themselves with the glamour of military glory.

One can well realize that those who stand at the head of the State, and are themselves the chief actors in this Jingoistic *épopée*, may have their heads turned by its gorgeous vistas, and consider it not only permissible, but praiseworthy, to deny the people their freedom for the sake of such a "grand" future.

And that is not all there is to sustain autocratic obstinacy. There is the fiction of the all-powerful ruler, standing as a tribune of the people, above class interests and class jealousies, and able to be the benefactor and protector of the masses. This fiction has been exploded scores of times, and never so thoroughly as during the past reign. Yet it recurs over and over

again in the highest quarters, as with the lowest stratas of the rural population, because the ignorance of the realities of our political life prevailing at the Imperial Court is as dense and impenetrable as that which obtains in the most benighted sections of our peasantry. There is the narrow and one-sided criticism of parliamentary institutions, the exaggerations of their small drawbacks, and the overlooking of their great advantages; a criticism to which those systems are particularly open now in the epoch of social struggle, the most advanced countries being on the eve of the creation of new social and political life. The entanglement of the French parliamentary system, the Panama scandals, as well as the senseless dynamite outrages, are all fuel to the autocratic fire.

If a Mr. Stead is ready to sum up his defence of autocracy in Russia by telling us that the constitutional *régime* is after all as bad as autocracy, why should we expect a Nicholas II. to be more sensible?

And the broader, the more enlightened, and truly democratic conceptions of the sovereign's duties and of people's rights—where are they to come from?

In the palmy days of autocracy, when it had an absolute unshakable confidence in its own stability, new ideas had a freer access to the court. The Empress Catherine II. entrusted the education of the future Alexander I. to the republican La Harpe; Nicholas I. called to the same office the humanitarian poet, Joukovsky, who was one of the leading men of his time. But such things are not possible

nowadays. Autocracy has been cowed, and become suspicious and cautious. Men holding the same positions among their contemporaries as La Harpe and Joukovsky will not be allowed to come within gunshot of the court.

All that penetrates into the secret precincts of the Imperial Court—men, books, newspapers alike—are carefully tested, and the Tzar, grand dukes and duchesses, up to the most distant branches, are kept under a supervision much more strict than the most "dangerous" class of citizens.

Acting systematically and uninterruptedly for at least two score of years, that sort of "natural selection" has debased the intellectual standard of our highest circles to a degree that is inconceivable to ordinary mortals.

There is little chance of another Peter the Great coming upon the Russian throne, to make up for the lost time, and once again bring Russian political institutions into harmony with those of the European West.

Nature has wonderful caprices, and a happy accident may belie all these forecasts. But it is most unlikely that such a happy exception should be ever presented by the legitimate heir to the throne, who naturally has the least chance of becoming such an exception. And if among the other members of the Imperial family, men or women, there should be one so especially favoured by nature and circumstances as to escape being cast in the common mould, the only way for making such a happy anomaly of any use would be through a palace revolution, which would dethrone the elder branch

of the dynasty, putting in its place a younger one. Otherwise Russia has no chance of ever seeing "a Revolutionist on the throne," as Peter the Great was called.

Anyhow, it seems pretty certain that Nicholas II. is not a second Peter. Up to the present he has shown no initiative.

A caricature, attributed by rumour to the young Empress, is circulating in St. Petersburg, representing Nicholas II. as a baby with a towel round his neck, sitting at a table on a high baby chair, and fed from the spoon by his ministers.

Quite recently the most conspicuous member of the Tzar's cabinet, Prince Lobanod, made a public statement which comes pretty much to the same. I mean his much commented interview with the correspondent of the London *Times*, in which he said very candidly that "it is quite a mistake" to suppose that the will of the Tzar is his own individual will. In reality, the Tzar's will is the national will, which first imposes itself on a "certain selected few," who pass the knowledge on to their Imperial master. "They impress the idea upon him as an inspiration of the loftiest and truest wisdom; it becomes part of the atmosphere by which he is surrounded; it settles in his mind, and then he gives it utterance."

In plain English it means that the Tzar is a puppet in the hands of his ministers.

This frank statement has not been contradicted or corrected by the prince, and we must accept it as true.

One can hardly expect any great bold step

from a ruler who for a whole year has consented to play such an ungrateful part. But whether his reign will be one of obtuse and relentless tyranny like his father's, it is too early to decide. He will do nothing without pressure from outside. That is certain. He is a Tzar for that. But it remains yet to be seen what amount and what kind of pressure will be necessary to force his hand.

To judge a political situation objectively and dispassionately, in other words correctly, as far as possible, we must take things as they are, and not as we would like them to be.

The boundless conceit of Autocracy, as well as its timidity, must not be omitted from our calculations. All Tzars lose, to some extent, their heads on being confronted for the first time with the enormous machine of the State they have to control. Alexander III., the born reactionist, exhibited, as we have seen, a leaning towards liberalism during the first months of his reign. Alexander II. began to show slight signs of his true tendencies at the end of the second year of his reign, and pledged himself to his first great reform only three years after his accession to the throne. One can well conceive that with the troubled conditions of the country, the young Tzar might feel inclined to keep in the beaten tracks for a longer period still; indefinitely, if possible. But the country cannot, and will not, stand that just because it is in a troubled condition.

The neutrality of the Tzar does not mean immunity from oppression. It means simply an unbridled tyranny of bureaucracy, freed from

the very semblance of control. In his speech to the Zemstvos, the young Tzar asks the country to condone him that, and to leave him a free hand, on the plea that he means to do well by the people.

We will not question his good intentions, but who can believe in his power to realize them? In a bureaucratic despotism, benevolence toward the peasants and solicitude for their interests can be manifested in one way only: by increasing the power of bureaucracy to interfere in the affairs of the peasants—that is, by their greater economical and political subjection to the officials. The thirteen years of the past reign have shown us clearly enough what this patriarchal benevolence comes to. The naïve assurances of the young Tzar will not induce educated Russia to forswear its aspirations after freedom, nor will they satisfy popular Russia. They do not hold out any ray of hope to either.

The country is quiet as yet, expectant. But this cannot last. The combustible materials are too many, and the dissatisfaction with the new reign too bitter. All this while the restless cynicism of the reaction is adding fuel to the fire, working unceasingly for a new revolutionary revival, and will not stop hammering on until it succeeds in bringing it about.

What form this revival will take it is impossible to foresee. Imagine three horses running the same race. The black horse of popular insurrections, the red horse of terrorism, and the white horse of military risings. All the three have scoured at different times the vast Russian

plains. All the three are undoubtedly in the field now. Which will reach the goal first? The one that will be spurred hardest, that is all one can tell. But which it will be the future alone can show.

The peasants are the Benjamins of the Russian Tzars. But we must always bear in mind that the tenderness of the "Little Father," the Tzar, to his "little children," the peasants, is not altogether disinterested. The peasants are the only section of the community that pay without asking what is done with the money. The middle and upper class will not submit to it. Knowing this, the autocrats act accordingly.

The Russian Tzars have had but one expedient for staving off as long as possible the necessity of appealing for support to the country —to put the screw upon the peasants. And in order to squeeze from the peasants as much as possible, the Government naturally tries to make their work as fruitful as possible; and for the past thirty-five years the Russian Government has been engaged in solving the interesting economic problem of how to make the peasant's labour as productive as that of a free man, while it deprives him of the fruits of his labour as completely as if he were a slave. This economic puzzle has been solved by the introduction of a kind of collective slavery of the peasants to the State. For whilst the individual is left just enough freedom to make him dependent upon his own resources, the State assigns to itself the better half of his income. But each individual peasant knows that not

half but the whole of his income may go, and that he may be left a beggar, unless he strains his wits and energies to the utmost and makes the best of his opportunities. Serfdom had no such effective stimulus; and the productivity of the national work has trebled within two generations, to the advantage of the State exclusively. With eighty million people working for it as serfs it has been unable to make both ends meet. But collective enslavement pushed beyond a certain limit leads unavoidably to individual enslavement.

After a time, economic pressure becomes insufficient to make labour highly productive. Something more stringent is demanded, and the Administration receives new powers of the patriarchal kind, and this time over individuals. The rod is re-introduced as an integral part of good government, and the peasants become gradually enslaved to the officials, just as they were earlier enslaved to the nobility.

The greater the expenses of the State the more "benevolent" the Tzars become toward the peasants, and the more solicitous that they shall not damage their own interests.

The paternal disposition of the young Tzar means simply that he will go on turning the screw as long as it will stand it—a sad outlook for the peasants, and for the future of the dynasty as well.

The Russian peasants are one of the most patient races on earth; but there was one thing which made them rise in violent rebellion—serfdom. They rebelled against it in the past, and the two hundred servile riots of 1850-55

proved that they were on the point of rebelling once again, when the Tzar, Alexander II., had the wisdom to start his timely reforms, in order to substitute, according to his own words, "a revolution from above for a revolution from below."

Now the most striking fact of our domestic policy is the gradual reinstalment of serfdom in its most salient features. We have seen what strides have been made in that direction during the reign of Alexander III. No doubt is possible that the Government of Nicholas II. mean to follow in the same line to the bitter end. In July last a new law was passed granting to the officials the right of receiving up to one-third of the wages of defaulting taxpayers in payment of their debt to the State. The new law applies, by way of experiment, to factory labourers only, but it is sure to be extended to the rural districts as well. The press speak of it as of a certainty. In fact, there is no reason to treat the same peasants differently at the factories and in their native villages.

Now as one half of our peasants are constantly and inextricably indebted to the State, and as many of them would refuse to work for wages reduced by one-quarter or one-third, the next step would be to give the officials the right to send the defaulting taxpayers to any work they choose—as the village communes are now doing. A project for a new law is afloat, the purport of which is that the Government should declare the land held by the peasants, for which some of them have already paid two-thirds of the

value, the inalienable property of the State, transforming the redemption money into a permanent tax. This means depriving the peasants of all the economic advantages gained by their emancipation and acquired on the strength of it.

If this measure is carried out, which is not unlikely, one asks oneself, what remains of the peasant's freedom? And the question which comes next is, will the peasants stand it, and for how long?

The present international character of European culture, due to the facilities of intellectual and commercial intercommunication, prevents any country from remaining at a standstill. The interior development of Russia is one of the most striking proofs of this fact. It has gone on in all directions, notwithstanding the stagnation of her political institutions, and although the intellectual changes operating among the peasantry may be less palpable than those of her upper classes, owing to the enormous mass of people to be moved, still they are not on that account the less remarkable. The peasants of to-day are a different race from those of thirty years ago.

The whole of our democratic "intelligenzia," or intellectual class, is, and has been, devoting its best energies to the work of the enlightenment of the peasantry.

Upon this we have the record of a most interesting official document, which it would be a pity to ignore. It is a confidential communication from the Minister of the Interior to the Minister of Public Education. Its object

was to obtain his co-operation in stamping out a certain class of popular literature. But the incidental statements concerning the new movement to the people are still more interesting than the substance of the document. They bear testimony of work which the Minister of the Interior denounces as a danger to the State, and which has been going on uninterruptedly for more than thirty years, in all sorts of ways, and by all kinds of means: through school-books, through direct propaganda work—which the threat of the most drastic punishments has never been able to stop—and through the everyday intercourse of the peasants with their educated brothers. The germs of new ideas have found their way into the minds of the Russian peasants. They have tasted the forbidden fruit.

Very characteristic is the fact that among the addresses asking for liberal reforms, the Tzar, Nicholas II., received one from the peasants.

It is the first time in Russia that a peasant community has raised its voice in the name of freedom; but it will not be the last. The new generation, which knew not serfdom, has passed through the village schools—schools which no effort of Government could prevent from being the seminaries of broader ideas and feelings.

The modern peasants feel the ignominy of their position like human beings. The papers have reported a number of cases of suicide and some cases of insanity as a consequence of the corporal punishments inflicted. It is impossible that the reckless policy of the Government

towards the rural classes should not call forth a more active and effective form of protest. How soon it will come depends upon the amount of energy the autocracy puts into forcing its growth.

The exact time of a movement of any kind of the huge unorganized masses—like the eruptions of a volcano—cannot be predicted. No sign is given until the moment of the eruption comes. But under certain conditions the movement is sure to come, the only question is one of time.

The two other forms of rebellion which our past history offers to us have depended upon the educated classes, and would seem to be more controllable and foreseeable. But this is a mistake. All forms of revolutionary outburst are manifestations of an organic disease of the body politic, and in so far they do not depend upon man's will or preferences.

There can be no two opinions on the question, whether terrorism or military insurrection is the more desirable in the interests of freedom and the general political education of our country.

But it is as impossible to provoke a military insurrection if the historic condition has not created a favourable ground for it, as it is impossible to prevent an outburst of terrorism when its time has come. Military risings are possible only when some general idea has acted upon the whole mass of the educated class with such vehemence that even the military class has fallen under its influence.

The Decembrist insurrection was the out-

come of the great fermentation of spirit caused by the Napoleonic wars, and the occupation by the Russian troops of some French provinces, which brought the officers and soldiers into immediate contact with free institutions.

We have seen that fifteen years ago we had a very near approach to an insurrectionary attempt similar to that of the Decembrists, owing to the profound effect produced by the Turkish war of 1877 on one hand, and by the terrorist struggle on the other, which had stirred up the whole of the Russian people, and showed the weakness of the Government, and had given the revolutionary party the prestige of irresistible strength. Without some such agitation, due to general causes, the military class, living usually outside politics, cannot be induced to join in considerable numbers the ranks of a revolution. This is clear enough, but terrorism itself, although apparently the work of a handful of people, must have its organic causes.

To a great extent it is the work of the Government. Exceptional—one may say individual — provocation; unendurable deadly outrage to men's honour and most sacred feelings; this alone renders morally possible, and justifies, in the absence of any other means of redress, the fierce mode of retaliation which was adopted at one time by the Russian revolutionists.

But this personal element does not suffice. The Yakutsk butchery and the unspeakable outrages at Kara exceed the worst that was done by official brutality under Alexander II. Yet no act of terrorism followed them;

whilst terrorism began to make headway a few years later, when the memory of these offences was less burning, but when the general exasperation against the brutal *régime* had become ever so much keener. Everything that has a political object must have in it the element of hope, and an attack upon the Government, no matter in what form, will take place when the general state of public opinion promises to make it a serious blow to the system. That is why terrorism can more easily have a revival under Nicholas II. than under Alexander III. His position is weaker, and the discontent is broader.

It is not in a spirit of exultation that we point to such a possibility. The experience of the past has shown us how risky, how difficult, and in reality how slow, is the effect of terrorist methods. They narrow the field of action, restrict the fighting forces to revolutionists only, and make it all a pure game of chance. It is the worst of all methods of revolutionary warfare, and there is only one thing that is worse still—slavish submissiveness, and the absence of any protest. We could not look upon the revival of it otherwise than as a disgrace for Russia. Yet it would be a disgrace for Russia if she is not able to produce by way of protest anything stronger than terrorism.

Now there is only one means of preventing the possibility of such an outburst, and of turning to good account popular movements when they begin. It is for the whole of the Liberal opposition to avail itself of the present temporary lull, and by a broad and energetic action to

compel the unsettled Government to change the drift of its politics.

Liberal Russia is not inactive. The struggle is going on all along the line. The programme put forward by this vast and important movement is not constitutional in the European sense, for although it demands national representation, it leaves to the Tzar discretional right to listen to the voice of the nation or to disregard it. It is a protest, not against the autocracy of the Tzar, which is the root of all our evils, but against the autocracy of officials, which is the practical manifestation of the autocratic principle.

We may regret this half-hearted, inconsistent compromise, but there is no use shutting our eyes to the reality. Neither in the lines nor between the lines of the hundreds of articles written during this year of excitement in the Liberal dailies, weeklies, and monthlies, nor in the scores of addresses from the Liberal Zemstvos and municipalities, do we find the demand for the abolition of autocracy This is a fact one must admit and reckon with, whether one likes it or not. The so-called Nihilists alone stand for logic and consistency with European examples. The movement is vast, and exhibits one remarkable feature, a great unity. Not only is the programme identical, but its wording is almost identical too. This seems to point, if not to an organization, at least to a previous agreement upon the main points of common action.

The campaign has been opened by the Liberal Zemstvos, with that of Tver at their

head. The Tver address does not contain any demands for the restriction of autocracy. They are that the voice of the people should be heard by the Tzar, and they endorse explicitly the fact that the laws in Russia are "the expression of the will of the monarch."

The young Tzar made a solemn blunder by his rash sally of January 17th. After his speech every such demonstration becomes a crime. But they have not stopped on this account, and we hear of other requests of a similar nature. Authors, lawyers, printers, students, and professors have come forward with collective demands of liberal reforms in their respective departments. All these attacks have failed, as was to be expected. The authors and printers, to use military terminology, have been repulsed without any loss. The Zemstvos have sustained some losses, in the form of dismissals and exile of their leaders.

These are what may be called pitched battles of the Liberals, which are more or less known abroad, and have been reported by the English press. But all this time a kind of small, obstinate partisan warfare not noticeable to foreigners is going on in Russia. Every new project of law, every new measure, every conspicuous event of daily life, serves as a signal for the renewal of hostilities between the Liberals and Conservatives in the press of the capital and the provinces, and in the precincts of various elective assemblies. This naturally keeps up the Liberal agitation and increases its forces in the country. The drift of these partial efforts of the Liberal opposition can be summed

up in three items: liberation of the peasants from the grip of local officials, liberation of citizens from the arbitrariness of the Administration, liberation of the Zemstvos from the tutorship of the Ministry.

The struggle is difficult in a country like Russia, and surrounded with perils, but not such overwhelming ones as people generally suppose. Russia is not Turkey. Absolute stagnation is impossible in a country which has so vastly, steadily, and eagerly absorbed European culture. I have spoken of the progress of enlightenment within the masses of our people. It is but a faint reflection of what has been going on in the upper stratas of the nation. The interior progress among the well-to-do classes was ten, twenty times more rapid.

This inward change has not told upon the form of government, and very little upon the laws. But it has told considerably upon their application, and the mutual relations between the citizens and those in authority. Educated Russia has taken and appropriated to herself in practice a certain amount of rights which the law would not grant her. In the course of two generations, by dint of constant pressure, by the plurality of offences, repeated daily and by hundreds, educated Russia has overwhelmed the official class, forcing upon it a certain degree of tolerance for certain acts and deference to certain rights.

We have no freedom of speech. Our penal code is exactly the same as under Nicholas I. But whilst under the iron Tzar Dostoevsky and his companions were sent to penal servitude for

twelve years and more for reading prohibited books and talking about them, nowadays such offences are hardly punished at all. "We can not exile the whole of Russia to Siberia," the gendarmes themselves explain. We have no freedom of the Press, but we have a number of professedly and staunchly Liberal periodicals with hundreds of thousands of readers, publishing articles for which in Nicholas' time authors and editors would have been immured in a fortress for the rest of their lives, unless, by a special favour of the despot, they were declared madmen, and locked up in a lunatic asylum. And Count Nesselrode, Nicholas' Chancellor, would not have dared to breathe to his pillow the things which Prince Lobanov has said publicly about Nicholas' great-grandson.

This slow, unconscious and irresistible—geological progress we may call it, for it is like the secular changes in the structure of our planet—this progress will surely land us imperceptibly and safely into political freedom if we are prepared to wait for it another hundred years. But we expect the Russian people will by their efforts hasten its march, using as a lever the little which they have got through it. This new unwritten code, embodied in habits and traditions, is very unstable. It can be transgressed, and is transgressed by officials whenever they take the fancy. But the Liberal opposition, which numbers among its members the most representative men in the country, and which is mainly composed of people of good standing and position—the Liberal opposition gets the full benefit of it.

Moreover, the same organic progress has brought about another no less important change. It has created between the different strata of the nation, and between the individuals forming the body politic, a cohesion which did not exist before. The strength of the Liberal opposition lies in the fact that its members are the natural leaders of the country, known and looked up to by a more or less wide body of their fellow-countrymen.

They are not entirely at the mercy of the officials. Of course it would be simply silly to expect that the Liberal opposition will make the Government come to terms without much rough work. There will be a hard struggle, and persecutions. But the autocracy will never dare to go with them to the length of barbarities committed upon young men of no position, and unknown conspirators. The Government will not scruple to send a hundred students to Siberia; this is a customary thing to which people are used. But it will think twice before exiling one member of a Zemstvo, who cannot possibly be represented as a rebel and a man dangerous to public order. We have a public opinion, which the Government hesitates to defy. It has made a Count Tolstoi, invulnerable and inaccessible, to the hands of the authorities, who are bound to meekly swallow all the bitter truths which he says to their face. Of course, there is not another Count Tolstoi in Russia; but there are hundreds of men belonging to the Liberal oposition who are similarly protected by public opinion, though not to the same extent.

No large body of men take up a movement

which involves the sacrifice of everything. But it would be an aspersion upon the Russian nation to suppose that its selected citizens will not risk something for her.

The present movement can thrive and spread, passing on to broader and more energetic steps.

How will it develop? What will be the amount of resistance it will meet no one can tell. It depends upon so many circumstances and influences that cannot be foreseen. One thing is certain: that every victory it scores will be a new guarantee for peace and order in our country.

I will not say that its programme of reforms sketched above, including the crowning of the Liberal edifice—the consultative Chamber—will satisfy the so-called Nihilists. But any reform in the direction of self-government and civil rights which the opposition succeed in wringing from the Government, will stave off the danger of a violent outburst, and will prolong the present lull in exact proportion to the importance of such a reform.

The Chamber, which the Liberals are dreaming about, would have prolonged that lull very considerably—perhaps indefinitely, if the central Government is wise enough.

We object to a merely consultative Chamber, because it leaves everything with the Tzar, which is the same as saying with his advisers. Alexander III. has constantly disregarded the opinion of the "State Council, composed of grand dukes and high officials." In all vital questions he sided always with his few favourite Ministers, who were, in the Council, a small

minority. What guarantee have we that it won't be the same with the Chamber? And if it will be the same, why the game would not be worth the candle.

But suppose the Tzar will steadily abstain from using his discretional right of obstructing the will of the nation. Then we would have a national representation *de facto*, and there is not a fool among the Nihilists who would care to disturb him in the placid enjoyment of his sovereignty.

This is not a pledge made in the name of the so-called Nihilists. No individual man can claim that right.

I speak as an expert, and I do not think that there is "any Nihilist who will contradict my statements."

We are all Socialists, partisans of the economic reconstruction of modern society in the interests of the working masses, and we to a man would surely prefer the work of spreading our ideas among our people to that of fighting against an abstract point of State law.

Such is our attitude towards the very important movement which is being started in Russia. Its programme is not ours; but we wish it God speed, because it is exactly on the same lines as ours, only stopping a little short in its aim. And our sympathies are not passive. It is an important and most promising sign of the times that the two sections of the opposition are working hand in hand. The Nihilists, the Revolutionists have printed abroad the Liberal addresses, and are spreading them in thousands of copies among the Russians, and nobody was

warmer in their praises of the civil courage and patriotism of Liberals. Our friends are taking the same attitude in Russia. It is highly desirable that foreign public opinion should be on the side of the opposition in this critical moment.

Speaking to the English people, I should like to point out to them that whatever the apparent advantages of an alliance with the Russian Government, the future belongs to the opposition, and the permanent interests of the civilized world lie in the abolition of autocracy in Russia; for there is no safety or peace for the world as long as the present *régime* stands in our country.

THE END.

BILLING AND SONS, LTD., PRINTERS, GUILDFORD

DK 63 .S74 1905 C.1
King Stork and King Log :
Stanford University Libraries
3 6105 039 316 588

DATE DUE

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305